

U. S. S. R.

***WHAT IT STANDS FOR***

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## P R E F A C E

NEVER before has so much interest been evinced in the Soviet Union, as after the perfidious attack made on her by the Nazi Germany. In these pages an endeavour has been made to satisfy the general inquisition and it was with this purpose in view that the present work had been undertaken.

The U.S.S.R. represents the most heroic attempt in building a new civilization and a new world order. It represents the achievement of the greatest hope of all the people of all times. And in achieving its ideals the U.S.S.R. has followed and adopted a line of evolutionary development which stands in sharp contrast to the so-called modern civilization that has come to be associated with the rise and growth of the advanced countries of the rest of the world.

Of late, innumerable books have been published on and about the land of the Soviets but none of the books, it appears, has brought out in clear perspective the uniqueness of the Soviet civilization and how it is transforming the entire society for the making of a new man. Not much can be claimed of the present brief exposition of the Soviet Union except the simplicity and brevity which the author has throughout kept in view in the attempt to bring home to the people in general the life, living and ideal of the Soviet people.

The book comes out of the press much later than it should have and this delay has been mainly due to the all embracing impact of the war on this country which has been felt no less by the printing industry.

CALCUTTA

J. G. N.

*January, 1944*

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
U. S. S. R.	
Stands for :	
I. A NEW CIVILIZATION      ...      ...	1
II. SOCIAL AND RACIAL EQUALITY      ...	9
III. THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN      ...	
IV. A NEW MORALITY      ...      ...	38
V. THE END OF ALL EXPLOITATION      ...	50
VI. A NEW PLANNED ECONOMY      ...	61
VII. REVOLUTION IN ART AND CULTURE...	67
VIII. SCIENCE AND EDUCATION FOR ALL      ...	82
IX. RATIONALISM AND A NEW OUTLOOK...	101
X. A MAN IN THE RE-MAKING      ...	109



## CHAPTER I

### A NEW CIVILIZATION

U. S. S. R. stands for a New Civilization with new ideals, new values and new principles building up a new man—a man resurrected and regenerated. Up till the Great War we had only one social system. There were advanced and backward nations, but all followed a somewhat similar line of evolutionary development. Since the October Revolution in Russia, we have on our planet two social systems which are as antithetic and antipodal as they are challenging and conflicting with each other. The one is represented by only one country—the Soviet Union and the other by the rest of the world. Since then Soviet Union has presented to the world a New Civilization which stands for those principles and ideals to which the exploited, the down-trodden people of the Bourgeois Western civilization aspire. These principles, now on trial, differ from the principles of the competitive system of every man for himself, with the profit-making motive as the chief incentive with men being used as means and not ends, with all the consequential exploitation of the mass of the people that inevitably follows.

Soviet Union stands for a civilization where anarchy in production has been eliminated. Economic life has been integrated and planned in accordance with actual needs. Crises due to over-production and their aftermath of human distress and destitution have been banished. Hunts for foreign markets, spheres of political and economic influence and fields of investments are no



longer necessary thus eliminating the chief cause of wars. Labour has ceased to be a means to an end. It is an end in itself. Labour is now the part of one's life. Poverty has been completely liquidated. Inequality of all kinds—economic, social and sexual, has been abolished. The exploitation of man by man and woman by man has ended. Man is fully regenerated and emancipated and is imbued with a new morality and a new social outlook. The monopoly of education has disappeared and illiteracy has been completely banished. Culture has become a common heritage and a common right of all men and women and their innate gifts and potentialities are unfolded to usher in a new era. Mysticism and supernaturalism have died. The cult of religion has changed and the devotion to gods and goddesses has been replaced by the devotion to the building-up of a new Social order. Prejudices and superstitions have vanished. In fact, attitude towards every aspect of human life has been revolutionised, thus creating a civilization of a different and unique pattern.

Let us examine the contemporary European civilization, which has been imposed by White Man, all over the world, and see how far is the new civilization presented by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic different in its features and characteristics from the present civilization in the rest of Europe and from the decadent civilizations of the past. According to Professor Arnold Toynbee, there were 27 distinct civilizations within historic times of which five survive to-day. These are, western civilization, which, as he observes, has succeeded in embracing within its system not only Europe and North America but also all navigable seas and all parts of the world, and four other extant civilizations: the Islamic, the Hindu, the Far Eastern and the Orthodox

Christianity.

Under the present civilizations we find that a few are privileged to live whilst millions are allowed bare existence. The privileged few receive education, and develop themselves physically, mentally and culturally. These people have all leisure. The others work not for their own rich and decent life but to make others live in comfort and leisure. They just exist like some decaying matter. Thus we see two spheres in these civilizations. The sphere of exploiters and that of exploited, the oppressors and the oppressed, the "haves" and the "have-nots."

We find disunity and contradictions in the contemporary civilizations. The increase in the productivity of labour by the application of modern science in industry and agriculture has led all the civilized countries excepting U. S. S. R. to the paradoxical result of destitution continuing in the midst of plenty. Inventions are encouraged but not simultaneously applied. Science is promoted but frustrated at the same time. The capitalist producing organizations close factories, shut down mines, stop building operations and destroy the undue abundance of the harvest. The way to achieve plenty is to burn the crops and throw the fish back into the sea whilst millions of people go under-fed, under-clothed and under-housed.

In opposition to this type of economic life is that of the Soviet Union, where co-operation replaces competitive chaos and planning succeeds disorder. The community rather than the self-seeking individual stands in the centre of the picture. The welfare of the whole and of each individual within it replaces, as the ruling factor, the welfare of a select class or classes. The elimination of the profit-seeking motive makes room for the higher motive of service. The national organi-

zation of production and distribution of wealth appreciates service and the emphasis is transferred from scarcity to abundance.

A new attitude towards life is the natural result of the new economic morality mentioned above. Individuals, all individually become ends as well as means. The development of human potentialities of each individual receives the fullest opportunity and encouragement and leads to a new humanism. The mentality of the mass of the people is so changed that they are inspired to play a creative role in life, and culture receives a fresh stimulus.

The U. S. S. R. has destroyed the old world order in one-sixth of the globe. It has created a new civilization in its own land and is striving to spread it further.

In his book *The Socialist Sixth of the World*, Hewlett Johnson has successfully brought out that the present system (capitalism) lacks both moral and scientific basis. It has thwarted the individual by denying to him the thrill and satisfaction of a developing human life. It robs society by leaving uncultivated and unutilised whole ranges of potential ability. "Slumps and booms, unemployment and mis-employment, the dole and the multi-millionaire, the scales weighted for financiers and against the workers, frustrate society and produce strains and stresses whose logical conclusion is war."

It is unscientific. Because it betrays the frustration of science and scientific knowledge. "Mass production is not mated to mass consumption. Machines and processes, by means of which scientists provide for our every material need, the means of leisure and of security—are deliberately run slowly. The gifts which belong to the people are denied them and recently, when despite all efforts, the quantity of commodities unrestricted at their source, had largely increased these were ruthlessly destroyed.

Half a million sheep were burnt in Chile ; six million dairy cattle and two million sheep were destroyed in the U.S.A. ; twenty six million bags of Brazillian coffee were dumped into the Pacific Ocean and a shipload of Spanish oranges shovelled into the Irish Sea. "We fling God's gifts back in His face .....Fruit left rotting on the trees. Hundreds of thousands of acres of cotton crops ploughed into the land again. Rubber-growers forced to bewail improved methods of increasing production ; rubber pests hailed as angels from heaven."

Beyond the wastage of misdirected energy, the actual achievements of applied science represent but a fraction of what could be done if new scientific theories, already approved, were practically applied. Application lingers far behind discovery. Faraday, for example, discovered electro-magnetic induction in 1831. It was not until 1882 that it was applied. The time-gap between the theoretical discovery and industrial application which should be short, mysteriously lengthens out, and in some cases it is indefinitely delayed.

Science is at the mercy of capitalism. Financial resources are denied, and science is set to trivial or harmful tasks. Capitalism works for profit, and when for any reason it ceases to be profitable to increase production, science is shunned. When science threatens, by a new process, to revolutionize production, then that invention is smothered.

If the present civilization thwarts science, it also denies morality. That morality may be said to be Christian as it is Christianity which constitutes the counter-part of the present civilization. It even outrages the moral basis of Christianity. Christianity demands four things : justice, freedom, a creative abundance of life, and an ever-widening fellowship,

which it repudiates. It has failed to do justice. It has created such an economic order which produces and tolerates wealth besides poverty, creates and perpetuates class distinction and fails to provide equal opportunity of work, leisure, education or security to all. Notice the contrast between Sunday, with its sermons on brotherhood, co-operation, good fellowship, and Monday, with its competitive rivalries, its veiled warfares, its concentration upon acquisition, its determination to build up one's own security. "For six days a week," writes John Gunther in his book *Inside Europe*, "the Englishman worships at the Bank of England, and on the seventh day at the Church of England." This is the hollowness of the present Christian era.

Above all, the present civilization is individualistic and capitalistic. It is capitalism that dominates human life, and dictates, consciously or unconsciously, to men and women, not only how they shall live, but whether life be permitted to them at all. The things by which men live are beyond their own control. Production of vital commodities, food, clothing, housing, and the like is carried on and permitted, not with a view to the ascertained need of the community as a whole, but merely as a means of livelihood and profit for the select and fortunate few. The result is want for many, opulence for some, and confusion for all. Never have the needs of the community as a whole been considered in the general plan with an eye to the maximum safety and well-being of each. All has been left to chance and profit. Blast furnaces remain cold, mines undug, and houses unbuilt, unless somebody's private profit sets forward the lighting, the digging and the building. Shivering miners cannot dig the coal they need ; naked men cannot weave their shirts and coats nor can the

man who lives with seven others in a single room enter a brickyard and build himself a house. The people who need these things and can produce them have no access to the land and the machinery of production. Private profit takes precedence over human life.

The disintegration of the Western civilization is inevitable because of its inherent contradictions. Soviet Union represents a new civilization which as previously stated stands not for two classes—the class of the rich and the class of the poor. The exploitative, the repressive and the inhibitive character of the bourgeois civilization has been destroyed. Its task is not negative or destructive but highly positive and revolutionarily constructive. It has transformed “poverty” into “plenty” in order to assure every citizen a good life irrespective of any distinction of colour, race or sex. She had nothing to guide her. “She wants a society without religion, with sex freedom, with external compulsion removed from family and love, with mental and manual workers reduced to a plane of equality, with the individual depending for his salvation, not on himself but the group. She stands for a civilization where a whole generation is being vigorously reared in the belief that religion is a monstrous unreality, that the accumulation of material substance is the grossest of wrongs and that the man in its pursuit especially the business man, is the slimmest creature on earth. A whole generation of women is being reared in the idea that women must be economically independent, and must participate in the affairs of the world on a basis of complete equality with men.”

Every brick that has gone to build the foundation of this citadel of new civilization represents the life of those revolutionaries who have given their lives for the

cause of humanity. Every brick that has gone to build the stupendous super-structure of this fortress, represents the new man with a new morality, a new social outlook, a new conscience, a new mentality and a new conception of every walk of life.

The U. S. S. R. is the most happy country. Plato's visualization has come true. He had said, "if ever there should exist a country where all wealth will be owned in common and where what is known as property will be abolished for ever, that country will at any rate be a happy one." And this is true of the land of the Soviets. There is no economic repression, no political subjection, no cultural exploitation and no social discrimination. The right to rest and leisure is inscribed in the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the State provides the people with all the facilities to exercise this right. The parks of rest and culture are open to everyone, these combine rest in picturesque surroundings with wholesome rational recreation. "The splendid thing" as Romain Rolland, remarked, "is that rests in this park (Gorky's Park of Culture and Rest) which serves as a source of education in joyous surroundings." In short, the subjective satisfaction provided by the end of all exploitation coupled with the objective creative and joyous conditions go to make this new civilization an abode of happy souls.

Let us now examine briefly the different characteristics and features of this new civilization which stand in sharp contrast to the contemporary civilization of the West.

## CHAPTER II

### SOCIAL AND RACIAL EQUALITY

THE whole social organization of the U. S. S. R. stands for social equality. To engage in socially useful work according to one's capacity is a universal duty. Unlike in the contemporary bourgeois civilization there is no one except the sick or physically maimed who is exempted from this duty. Work like leisure has to be shared by all able to join the social service. There is only one social grade in the U. S. S. R.—that of producer by hand or by brain excluding the young who cannot yet work and the aged or infirm who can work no more. This is what is meant by the "classless society" in which each serves in accordance with his ability and is provided for according to his needs.

It extends to the relations between the sexes and within the family groups. Husbands and wives, parents and children, teachers and scholars, friends of different sexes or people with not too unequal incomes like managers and factory operators, administrators and typists and even army officers and the rank and file live in an atmosphere of social equality and of freedom from servility or inferiority complex. What is still more unparalleled is the absence of prejudice as to colour or race. All enjoy not only complete identity of legal and political rights but also the fullest equality of freedom in economic and social relations.

We find yet another great feature of the social equality of the civilization of the U.S.S.R. which may be termed as universalism. In other countries the advantages and



amenities which their civilization provides, including most of the luxuries of life, do not reach the poorest or the weakest members of the community. The economic and social structure of society deprives these unfortunate people of the same standard of health and education or of the same intellectual development that is deemed to be necessary and normal for a man to live. These social arrangements do not even provide sufficient opportunities to these poor people for the development of their innate potentialities which lie dormant. The most distinctive feature of Soviet social structure and that to a degree unparalleled elsewhere is, that it provides every person with equal opportunity. This is well seen in the sphere of education. Though we will discuss it more fully in a separate chapter, it does merit a brief mention here. In the Soviet Union there is no discrimination in schools. All infants and children of school age and all adolescents obtaining higher education attend the same schools and colleges. Other countries, including India, during the past fifty years have striven to liquidate illiteracy but U. S. S. R. is the only country where efforts have been made not to create an educated class but to educate the nation as a whole. Thus, the principle of universalism on which the provision for health, schooling, training for life and choice of occupation is based, coupled with complete removal of all disqualifications of sex, race, or social position has resulted in a vast production of human energy, which can have a more effective and suitable choice of opportunity than in more rigidly regimented countries. Nowhere in the world is there so much variety and diversity in the choice of employments effectively open to the people as in U. S. S. R.

The most unique thing about Social Equality in the U. S. S. R. is the equality of all Races or Nationalities.

To a world torn by national strife with frontiers of all States bristling with bayonets, forts and tariff walls and "minorities in danger" with subsequent stunts of Pakistan, Khalistan and Hindustan, the Soviet Union presents the spectacle of 189 nationalities speaking 150 different languages and adhering to 40 religions living and working together in perfect peace and complete amity. Soviet Constitution of 1924 lays down, "There in the camp of capitalism-reign, national enmity, inequality, colonial slavery, chauvinism, national oppression, imperialist brutalities and wars. Here in the Camp of Socialism ..prevail mutual confidence and concord, national freedom and equality, a dwelling together of the people in peace and their brotherly collaboration. Dislike of the unlike is gone. Minority question does not exist, racial prejudices have disappeared and all races and nationalities stand on an equal footing with complete economic and cultural autonomy.

The Soviet Union is made up of all kinds of peoples representing all levels of culture at all stages of social evolution ; from the Paleo-Asiatic tribes of Kamchatka and on the Island of Sakhalin, just emerging from the Stone Age, to the Imeretians of the Caucasus, who possessed a developed art and literature while Anglo-Saxons were yet barbarians, from the roving reindeer and whale-hunting Chuckchi of the Arctic littoral to the settled people like the Greeks, building their stone cities in the Crimea on the ruins of those built by their fathers seven centuries before the Christian era. On the one hand are the patriarchal Avars, forbidding their women to sit, eat or speak in the presence of men and on the other hand is the survival of the matriarchate of the Yasai, or "women race", where the mothers and daughters do the trade and food-getting and the males are relegated to tending

the household. At one extreme are the hunting tribes like the Siberian Tungoz now called Evenki, with millions of square miles of virgin forest to wrest a living from, while at the other are the intensive soil tilling Ajarians, with rows of corn amidst their orchards, red flowered beans climbing up to the corn-stalks and a net of melon and pumpkin vines stippling the ground with green and yellow.

There is such a multiplicity of peoples that one can barely do more than enumerate them—Aiyors, Alents, Balkars, Bessermen, Chuvants, Crishens, Dargins, Dungsans... thus runs the list of nationalities many of whose names even were quite unknown under the old regime and nor was the State interested in knowing them.

Before the Revolution the various peoples were living in an atmosphere surcharged with mutual bickerings, and recriminations, they lived like enemies. In Trans-Caucasia, for example, bitter hostility existed between the Azerbaijan Turks and the Armenians, which sometimes led to the massacres of large populations. In Georgia the Armenian landlords and merchants were looked upon with great aversion and hostility. In Central Asia the Uzbeks were a dominant people who carried on blood feuds with the Turkomans. The Tadjiks and Iranians were not on friendly terms with their neighbours and former conquerors, the Uzbeks. In short, there was no friendship between any two nationalities.

The policy of the Tsarist Government was imperialist. Instead of attempting to promote racial and communal harmony, it followed the policy of Divide Et Impera. The feudal-bourgeois ruling classes of the Great Russians, headed by the Tsars ruthlessly exploited the non-Russian nationalities. To them they were simply "Inòrodzy", aliens by "origin"—the lesser breeds without

the law. The whole aim of Tsarist policy was to bring them to subjection as quickly as possible. And this was done in accordance with the procedure adopted by all the Imperialist Nations, for example, the English, by adopting the policy of "divide and rule" supplemented by a process of destroying the culture, traditions and languages of the subject races and striving to supplant them with its own. The policy of the Great Russians towards the non-Russians was "Russification." And to insure docility and obedience it kept them as peasants in a state of abysmal ignorance and economic vassalage. There was a conscious purpose behind this policy of, we may say, "Cultural Blackout." Thus the chief of the 5th corps of Gendarmes wrote to Nicholas I in a secret document, recently unearthed by the Soviet Government from Kazan, regarding the policy to be followed among the Tartar people. He declares, "Experience of all times shows that it is infinitely easier to govern an unenlightened people than a people who have received even a smattering of education." And thus, on all the territories under the influence of the Tsars there was pursued a policy of "planned backwardness."

Every great state has minority problems which present apparently insuperable difficulties. And within the territory of the U. S. S. R. too, there are extremes not only of climate, but also of culture, as described in the previous paragraphs. Each one attacks the problems in its own way but none has succeeded except the Soviet Union. The way in which the Bolsheviks have solved this problem is unique. This has been due to the simple belief that national and cultural ideals can co-exist side by side within a single economic order and within a single political state in which the same economic ideal is held. This single economic ideal being the abolition of exploi-

tation, profit-making and competition. The minority question becomes problematic in other countries because of the lack of single "economic ideal." As long as the principle of exploitation is accepted the minority problem can never be solved.

"It is no more necessary to force national minorities to accept the national cultural ideal of the majority within the same economic system than it is necessary for an Indian to divest himself of Indian national culture when he plays cricket with an English team. One thing only is required of an Indian cricketer ; he must observe the rules of cricket. And one thing is required of Georgian, Bye-lo-russian or Uzbek or of any other race, he must observe the economic law of socialism."—*The Socialist Sixth of the World*.

Nationality is a personal attribute like religion, it may be enjoyed to the full but not imposed on others. The economic interests of those who believed in production inspired by service and not by profit and live under a plan which considers the needs of everyone on an equalitarian basis, are the same whatever the nationality may be. The U. S. S. R. is based upon that economic interest and political plan and not upon the domination of any national majority.

Thus the problem in the U. S. S. R. has been solved by ending the regime of the feudalists and the capitalists and by establishing the most democratic form of Government based on the four principles which were embodied in the historic Declaration of the Rights of the People issued soon after the Revolution by the Soviet Government, under the joint signatures of Lenin and Stalin. They are :

1. Equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia.
2. The right of the peoples of the Russia to free self-

determination including the right to secede and form an independent state.

3. The abolition of all national and national-religious privileges and restrictions whatsoever.
4. Free development for the national minorities and ethnographic groups inhabiting the territory of Russia.

Now, what has actually been done to implement the principle of national and cultural autonomy and the policy of Bolshevik Government towards the problem of national minorities? The first practical step taken towards it was the redivision of regional areas. This was based, not upon military and political considerations as we have or had got it in India or under the Tsars but upon the national principle, supplemented by geographical and economic considerations. In this way three types of states were created : 1. Republics, members of the Union; 2. Autonomous Republics : 3. Autonomous Regions, national districts and national Soviets.

Those states are called "member states" which conform to the following conditions :

(a) The nationality giving its name to the state must represent the more or less compact majority in it ; (b) the population of the Republic must not be less than a million, (c) the state must be located at the national frontier so that it should be geographically possible for it to secede from the U. S. S. R. At present there are eleven Member states : The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (R.S.F.S.R.) : The Ukrainian and White Russian S. S. R.'s (Soviet Socialist Republics) the Kazak and Kirghiz S. S. R.'s, the Azerbaijan, Armenian and Georgian S. S. R.'s and the Uzbek, Turkoman and Tadjik S. S. R.'s. Those nationalities which did not represent a large compact majority in their region were accorded

autonomous republics or regions, which were included within the member states. Thus, for example, R. S. F. S. R. embraces 11 autonomous republics and 15 autonomous regions. In the case of those national groups which were either very small or were scattered about without inhabiting consolidated areas, national districts or Soviets were formed wherever they happened to be in a majority. Now, altogether in the U. S. S. R. there are five regions, 34 provinces, 22 autonomous republics and nine autonomous provinces. In short, the idea underlying the national redivision of territories and regions had been to accord to the utmost the right of self-determination to the component constituents and to provide all territorial conditions for the growth of national economy and culture.

The Soviet Central Asiatic Republics may be taken as a striking illustration of the policy of national demarcation. In the nineteenth century Russia conquered Central Asia. The Tsarist army seized a colony which yielded a revenue of something like one hundred million rouble a year. Eight million natives were kept in subjugation by the army and the police. Administrative boundaries were brought to the aid of the administrative apparatus.

The Tsarist legislator sketched the internal boundaries on his map, purposely dividing national and economic units in order to make it more easy to govern. He cut up the living body of the country. He cast a net, woven out of frontier lines, over Central Asia, which was inhabited by several nationalities. The frontier line divided the Kirghizes, some of whom found themselves in the Turkestan Province, others in the steppe—both under the rule of different Governor-Generals. The Bokhara protectorate and the vassal State of Khiva cut

into Russian Turkestan : they were playthings of Geography, retaining their formal independence, and inhabited by the same peoples as the neighbouring Russian possessions. The boundary between Bukhara and the Turkestan Province in the Kizil-Kum desert was laid down in such a way as to provide the route taken by the Russian troops when they were attacking Khiva with a sufficient large quantity of wells. The boundary cut right through the Zeravshan valley, and, traversing the only irrigation system, gave the upper parts of the Zervashan to Russia and the lower parts to Bukhara. Russia took possession of the water i.e. the power.

The Uzbeks, who lived on the banks of the Zeravshan, were artificially separated ; whilst in Khiva the boundary united the Rezbeks and the Turkomans. Nationalities were divided and purposely joined to each other. Thus enmity between different nationalities were created. When Soviets were established in Central Asia the old frontiers were at first retained but later on in 1925 national demarcation was effected. The following national states are marked now on the map of Central Asia. The Uzbeg Republic, formerly broken up into three states : the Tajik Republic, once divided between Bukhara and Russia ; the Kerghiz Republic, divided before the Revolution between two Governor-Generalships ; the Kava-Kalpak Republic, where territory formerly belonged partly to Khiva and partly to Russia. Now frontier lines mark national territories.

In this way all the important peoples in the west of the Soviet Union have been accorded self autonomy. But care has been taken in laying down the frontiers in accordance with the national principle, not to clash in any way with the economic divisions. Regions that were economic units were not broken up. For instance,



when the frontiers were laid down in Central Asia, each irrigation system was included as a rule in one state. The national principle was completed and corrected by the economic principle.

This regional division could not solve the problem of those peoples who could not come within the three categories. For example, some people like the Jews did not inhabit any definite area; others like the Greeks, the Bulgarians and the Czechs numbered only a few thousands and so could not be formed into a separate state. Besides, no section of the Union is homogeneous. A people which is in a majority in one region, is in a minority elsewhere. For this, the Soviet Government have passed elaborate measures for the protection of their national language and culture. Besides, wherever these minorities formed a substantial portion of the population of any village or district, local Soviets were set up in which their languages and national characteristics could have full play and where a local administration was to be carried on by them. Thus in Ukraine there are 115 Jewish Soviets and in White Russia there are fifteen. At Biro-Bidjan on the Amour river in Eastern Siberia, a Jewish autonomous region has been created. And on the shores of the Black Sea a negro village Soviet has been formed.

The general principles that govern the Soviet policy with regard to the granting of all such rights and privileges as should enable their peoples to develop their national characteristics were clearly brought out in the Resolution passed by the Twelfth Congress of the Russian Communist party in 1923 and adopted by the Central Executive Committee of U. S. S. R. on July 6, 1923, and finally ratified by the Second All Union Congress of Soviets on January 31, 1924. Following are the

fundamental points of that resolution :

- (a) That in establishing the central organs of the Union, equality of rights and duties of the republics be ensured both in their mutual relationship with each other, as well as in their relation with the Central Government of the Union;
- (b) That within this system of supreme organs of the Union a special organ be instituted representing on an equality basis all national republics and national regions without exception, possible provision being made for the representation of all minorities forming part of these republics;
- (c) That the executive organs of the Union be so constructed as to ensure the real participation of the representatives of the republics and the satisfaction of the needs and requirements of the people of the Union ;
- (d) That the republics be granted sufficiently wide financial aid, in particular, budgetary powers to enable them to exercise their own initiative in matters of state administration, culture and economy ;
- (e) That the organs of the national republics and regions be recruited chiefly from among the local inhabitants acquainted with the language, social life, manners and customs of the people concerned ;
- (f) That special legislations be promulgated providing that in all state organs and in all institutions serving the local non-native populations and the national minorities, the language of these latter be employed, and that all violators

of natural rights, in particular the rights of national minorities, be punished with revolutionary severity ;

- (g) That educational work be intensified in the Red Army with the object of instilling the idea of the brotherhood and solidarity of the peoples of the Union, and that practical measures be taken to organise military units, at the same time taking all necessary steps to ensure the defence of the republics.

It was a result of this resolution that the council of nationalities was set up to protect the interests of the different nationalities. As to how this is done will be made clear if we know the entire constitutional machinery of the Soviet Government. The supreme body in the Union is the All Union Congress of Soviets which consists of delegates varying in number from two to three thousands. As it is impossible for it to meet regularly and is too huge to act as a parliament, it usually meets every third year in order to criticise or approve the policy of the Central Executive Committee in which is vested all the power. The Executive Committee consists of two bodies : (1) The Union of Soviets or Federal Council, and elected by the Congress ; (2) the Soviet of nationalities to which the member states and the autonomous republics send five representatives each, and the autonomous regions one each. It is in this council that the representatives of the separate nationalities meet where they can discuss the matters which affect them, state their needs, obtain information and experience which will help them in a constructive way and teach them to govern themselves in accordance with a uniform national policy. The council of nationalities enjoys equal powers with the Federal Council and no

law can be passed without its approval. It draws up statutes in the interests of the nationalities and no measure passed by a member state can be vetoed without its consent. There is only one body which is superior to it, as is to others, and that is the All Union Congress, because it represents the entire body of workers of the Union. Thus in the Government of the Union, i.e., the federal centre, the smaller nationalities have been given equality with the bigger ones. Even those nationalities which have not yet attained the status of a constituent republic (autonomous republics, autonomous regions and national areas), enjoy autonomy in local matters and send their representatives to the Soviet of nationalities. In case of disagreement between the two councils, the issue is referred to a conciliation committee formed of an equal number of each chamber.

Hence the Soviet Union is designed to possess a common economic system the benefits of which all could share and to the conduct of which all would contribute. And each national minority is free to use its separate culture, language, literature and traditions. This principle of complete equality of all races is most strikingly manifested as already stated, in the service of education. It is held that in order to make education genuinely universal, the children of every race must have access to teaching in their own vernaculars. Nothing has been more characteristic of the Tsarist Government than its persistent policy of "Russification", but going to the opposite extreme the Soviet Union aims at providing schools in the vernaculars for all its constituent races, great or small, even where, as in some three dozen cases, the vernacular had never been reduced to writing. It was indeed necessary to invent alphabets for them, the Latin not the Russian being taken as the basis—and to print for them

the first books that they had ever seen. There are schools in U. S. S. teaching in more than eighty different languages and there are newspapers in as many as 88 languages.

The culturally advanced Ukrainian and the Nomadic, the illiterate Uzbeks, the great Russian and the gypsy are free to develop their national personalities. This encouragement to self-expression and development of cultures along national lines led Stalin to remark, "It may seem strange that we, advocates of merging of all cultures into one common language, are at the same time partisans of the flourishing of national cultures. But there is nothing strange in this ; national culture must be allowed to unfold and develop to make apparent all their potential qualities." It is only through its own language that the genius of people can unfold and express itself the realm of art and literature. In this way it is held that the opportunity to see and understand the culture and achievements of others serves as a powerful factor in promoting a spirit of mutual respect and esteem.

The result of this enlightened and unique policy had been a growing richness of life and intercourse of the peoples. The new national freedom and the new economic order has led invariably to an expansion of industrial and cultural life. Resources, cultural and material untapped before, are developed now. The national republics are brought into physical and cultural proximity with each other and all with the centre. The gap which separated the industrial advanced city from the rural countryside in technical and cultural development is bridged up. Siberia, which used to be a symbol of anything that was backward and reminded one of penal servitude and savagery is no longer a land for exiles.

The immense potential wealth is being actively exploited, agriculture is being mechanised, industries have been developed and the culture of a skilled labouring community is flourishing. The Kazáks, who till recently were Nomads living in felt tents and followed their herds of cattle from one place to another in search of fresh pastures, have permanent up-to-date settlements with hospitals and schools and instead of a roadless land, there is a network of railways and fine roads.

The Jews who in Tsarist Russia were deliberately confined to the so-called 'defined limits of settlement', or the 'pale settlements' and were debarred from agriculture, are now being encouraged to take to farming both by the state and the public opinion. Helped by the Government, the Jewish immigrants are building new settlements, draining marshes, clearing tracts of forests, ploughing up new land and sowing crops, thereby creating a new centre of industry and culture with newspapers and periodicals published in Yiddish, and a permanent Jewish Theatre.

Next there are the forests of Siberia and the Far East which were inhabited by some 30 different and numerically small nationalities of the North, such as the Evenks, Tunguzes, Nanians, Golds, Nivkhians, Giliaks, Lauravetlans, Tchouckchis, etc. Before the revolution all these peoples were in an extremely backward state of civilization. They were still using stone spearheads, bows and arrows, and their only occupations were the breeding of reindeer, fishing and hunting. They possessed no written language and the Tsarist scientists regarded these tribes as doomed to extinction. But now under the Soviet regime, not a single people is dying out; on the other hand they are given full opportunities to grow and develop themselves. The economic

life of these people has been radically altered and the collective and co-operative system has been introduced. A number of state establishments, known as cultural bases, have been set up in the forests, with baths, dispensaries, schools and hostels. Tens of millions of people ceased to be aliens and became equal citizens of the Soviet Union, enjoying equal rights with its masters. "From great Moscow to the farthest border, from the Arctic Sea to Samarkand, everywhere man proudly walks as master of his own immeasurable fatherland." In the struggle against their country's enemies, in their fight for the fatherland, the Soviet people sealed the indissoluble friendship and Voluntary Union of all the nations of the Soviet State.

The Soviet State has ensured each constituent nationality with ample development of its native culture. The Soviet State assists the formerly backward peoples in the relatively more rapid development of their economy and culture so that they may be on par with the more advanced peoples and republics of the Soviet Union. The cultural progress of the non-Russian nationalities can be gauged by the increasing number of books and newspapers that are being published in scores of languages. In the R. S. F. S. R. alone books are published in more than one hundred languages. The library system is also growing. In 1913 Armenia had 3 libraries and in 1937, 468. Only two newspapers were published in Azerbaijan in 1913, while now 123 are appearing. A total of 8,100,000 books were published in Azerbaijan in 1938. Approximately the same rate of development applies to the other republics also.

In short we find an all round progress. All the national republics have achieved a degree of national prosperity, and cultural development and the material

wealth and the well-being of the people has increased a hundred-fold. Illiteracy has been wiped out, higher education put within the reach of all and provision made for scientific and technical research. Literature, music, drama, folk art, cinema and sport have been developed on a most extensive scale alike in the tundras of Siberia and the hitherto forsaken nooks and corners of Soviet Central Asia and the mountain recesses of Caucasia thus giving rise to the renaissance of the national cultures—national in form and socialist in content.

It is only now during this war that the importance of a vast country embracing many nationalities but having no national problems could be understood and realised by the foreign countries. It is only due to this peoples' unity that the Soviet people could put up an epic resistance to Hitler's armies superior in mechanised equipment and experience. It is due to this granite unity of the numerous big and small nations living in the vast territories of the Soviet State that the country did not meet with the same fate as that of France or other European countries. The territorial redivision and industrialisation of the country has proved to be of no less importance. This has not only considerably reduced the military vulnerability of the country but increased the invincibility of every region and direction. Regional self-sufficiency could make possible the policy of 'Scorched Earth' of now occupied areas and still fall back on productive regions.



## CHAPTER III

### EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

In no other part of the world woman occupies an equal status with men except in the Soviet Union and every vestige of the old laws or social arrangements relegating women to a subordinate position have been swept away. In no sphere of life are men accorded privileges from which women are debarred.

As far back as 1866, Marx had made it abundantly clear that the working class struggle against the capitalist state would be of no avail, unless women were made free from their domestic and economic bondage. And not later than 1917 it was also held by Lenin that "there can be no talk of any sound and complete democracy, let alone of any socialism, until women take their rightful permanent place both in the political life of the country and in the public life of the community in general."

On the other hand if we just study the general views with regard to the position of women in India prevailing during the period of 1860 to 1917, we find them in sharp contrast to the views held by Marx and Lenin. Woman has been looked upon as man's chattel, always catering to his needs and requirements. The only concern she has in life is with the children, the church and the kitchen, with the result, that apart from the drudgery and wretchedness of domestic life she has been kept altogether unconcerned and aloof from other social and political spheres of life. Illiteracy is rampant among them and they are, on all sides, surrounded by prejudices, superstitions and priestcraft, with no educational

opportunities or proper training and social standing. As a result of the lack of proper opportunities for education and training, she has not been able to unfold and exploit her innate potential values—thus depriving the society as a whole of their potential values which, if given proper opportunities of unfolding, would have contributed a lot to its progress and advancement.

And it was woman who had been for centuries subjected to poverty, repression and enslavement. Hence the Soviet Government spent large amounts on the emancipation of women. "The Soviet Union has set itself diligently, not merely to treat the lesser breeds without the law, with equality, but recognising that their backwardness was due to centuries of poverty, repression and enslavement, has made it a leading feature of its policy to spend out of common funds considerably more per head on its backward races than on the superior ones, in education and social improvements, industrial investments and agricultural reforms."

Article 122 of the Stalin Constitution says: "The women of the U. S. S. R. enjoy exactly the same rights as the men, in all spheres of the economic, public, cultural and political life of the community. These rights are secured to women by the fact that they are entitled to equal rights with men to labour, payment for work, rest, social insurance and education, state protection of the interest of mothers and children, leave on full pay for women during pregnancy and to the benefit of an extensive system of maternity homes, creches, and nurseries."

The woman enjoys complete political equality with man. Article 137 of the Constitution declares: "Women have the right to elect and be elected on equal terms with men." She has the right not only to vote but to

hold any office for which she is fitted. With the sole exception of a very few professions involving heavy physical labour, there is not a single branch of industry in which women are not employed. In 1937 approximately 35 or nearly 9 millions of all persons employed in the various public institutions and industrial establishments were women. Unlike other countries, like America and England, Soviet women in high offices are too common to command more than a passing notice in the press.

In almost all the circles which decide the affairs of the national politics, women have a definite voice and power. The new society thus seeks to develop the political consciousness in women and to encourage them to seek everywhere in the Government positions of trust and responsibility. In other parts of the globe, we find the deep-rooted idea that it is a reflection on men to be governed by women, or that if allowed free rein in Government, women will, in time, impose their domination on men. But this idea has never invoked any anxiety in Soviet manhood. They don't think or talk in terms of dominations of sexes. They believe that women are no competitors but companions of men in the affairs of the world.

The Russian women have achieved economic equality with men. The old notion which still exists in other countries that work is debasing especially for women, and that they must be merely objects of adoration at home, has lost all its force. It has rather given way to the new conception that to be idle is a crime and is not less degrading to women than to men. It is always emphasised that the spiritual liberation of women is conditioned by her economic emancipation. Women must do something to contribute to the economic gain of the

nation and to win their own economic independence. Economic independence, it is held, is the pre-requisite of sex equality.

To make the women in a better position for being economically independent, Soviet Government have from the very beginning insisted upon equal rates of pay for women and men. Huge amounts of money have been spent on overcoming illiteracy among women, on their technical training for industry and on the provision of cadres of women experts in all branches of industry. There has been a huge increase in the percentage of women among the students attending courses at higher educational establishments, technical colleges, universities and institutions. "In 1937 no less than 41 per cent of the total number of students in the workers' faculties were women. Women have entered many professions formerly closed to them. There were, in 1937, nearly 100,000 women engineers and technicians employed in industry. There were also about 50,000 women doctors. There is nothing unusual in seeing women working as engineers, agricultural experts and ship's captains, mechanical harvesters and tractor drivers. The extensive automatisisation and mechanisation of industrial process has done much to facilitate the introduction of female labour into industry." (Soviet Comes of Age).

All taboos, traditions and economic policies that fostered discrimination against women have been done away with. In order that women should be able to give of their best in labour, study and social work of the community, it is essential that their functions as mothers should be adequately safeguarded and provided for. Special facilities are provided to enable women to bring up and educate their children. Women employed in industry and public undertakings are granted four

months' leave on full pay, two months before and two months after confinement. Immense sums are paid out from the State Social Insurance Funds in the form of maternity benefits and there is an extensive system of child welfare centres throughout the entire country with nurseries, creches and milk kitchens for infants ; kindergartens and playgrounds for young children ; and schools, stadiums, pioneer palaces, summer camps, sanatoria and homes of rest for school children. Moreover the introduction of communal dining rooms and laundries have ended the domestic drudgery which home life used to mean to women, and now they have more time to devote to their children.

Together with political and economic equality the Russian woman has attained cultural and social equality with men. Educational opportunities in and out of schools are as open to her as to men. Nor is she debarred from the so-called men's professions such as medicine, engineering and law. This is because of the new morality and the new social outlook that the Revolution has brought about in the new society. While the gospel of Fascism proclaims that woman should revert to her original status of domestic drudgery and regards her as an inferior being, materially and morally dependent on man, the Soviet woman is absolutely free to develop her own individuality and carve her own destiny. She has ceased to be a mere female character or as a mere "object of sensuality." She cannot continue to be a mere ornament or a mere object of adoration with her whole life wrapped up in man. She has, rather, cultivated fresh interests and diversions. Although she can never forget that she is a woman, yet she remembers that she is in addition a citizen a worker with obligations to her group and duties to the State.

In the sphere of social status too, women enjoy complete equality with men. Women are nowhere made to feel that they need distinct social treatment. They can go alone and unescorted to any place they like with as much freedom as men, without invoking any criticism, suspicion or opprobrium. They are thrown on their own responsibility and on their own good behaviour on par with men. There are no hotels, no waiting rooms and lounges, no restaurants, no clubs, no railway compartments; no bus or tram seats with signs "For Ladies Only." There are no colleges or schools exclusively for women. There is no place in Russia where women must enter a building through the side and not the front door as, for example, in most of our colleges and other institutions in India or other advanced countries of east and west. In short all taboos limiting woman's sphere of movement or activity or subjecting her to special restrictions have been removed in U. S. S. R.

Apart from the abolition of all kinds of limitations and restrictions the most important feature of Russian life is the absence of inhibitions, restraints, suspicions and taboos in the customs regulating the relations of the sexes. There is complete freedom between the sexes—a phase of life in which woman has for centuries been discriminated against with especial cruelty. Men and women meet, talk, discuss and mix with each other most freely on all occasions without the least embarrassment, abashment or reserve. It is considered proper for men and women, young and old, married and unmarried, to visit each other at all times of day or night in their private rooms whether in apartments or hotels without any ceremony whatsoever. In the universities men and women live in the same dormitories, though

in separate rooms but they constantly visit each other to regale themselves with tea and bread, to study together or just sit and discuss problems of life and revolution. Sex hygiene and technique of sex are discussed as freely as other non-sexual subjects. The mass of the Russian people regards sex with undisguised frankness, without the sense of curiosity, mystery, horror or sin.

The sex attitude of the Soviet woman has been rationalised. She never regards sex with disdain. She talks of sex with no more reserve than of music, the theatre and the weather. She does not enter into liaisons with men light-heartedly. Despite her frankness and all her freedom, the Russian woman is not easily won to sex association. The country is not steeped into sex-orgy as most of the foreigners believe because of the new freedom in sex. The Soviet Union makes it clear to the individual that his own welfare and that of society demands judicious self-control. Personal health must not suffer through undisciplined indulgence. Poor health not only lessens a person's enjoyment of life, but impairs his capacity to render his best services to the society. The Russian individual fully realises his responsibility to the society and has cultivated the habit of self-discipline and self-control.

It was, however, not enough to set women free from legal and political fetters, and even from economic and social disabilities. It was necessary that she should enjoy the freedom of motherhood—a function exclusively feminine. After the revolution the woman has come to enjoy this freedom too.

The stern hand of law, social arrangements and conventions in other countries have not been able to put an end to criminal abortions, abandonment of infants and in extreme cases of infanticide. It has

brought into being these "unwanted children" who are neither an asset to their parents nor their country through no fault of theirs. They did not ask to be born, and their parents did not wish them to be born—but the law of the land and the will of God decrees that they should be born, once having been conceived. This applies specially to India where both birth-control and abortion are vetoed, and women rotate in a cycle of gestation and lactation.

The woman with a child outside wedlock is, in present-day Russia, not necessarily an object or subject of public obloquy. Neighbours and friends do not necessarily regard her as debased. Nor does the law bear down on her with acrimony. On the contrary it holds her on the same level of respectability as other women. The child has the same legal standing as any child born in regular marriage. The very word illegitimate has been expunged from the vocabulary of the Nation. The father is a father, and the mother is a mother, and both must meet their obligation to each other and even more to the child.

The performance of motherhood which imposes on women, not only a serious strain on health but also, in capitalist countries, a heavy financial burden, has been made free from these encumbrances. In the U.S.S.R. the whole cost of child-bearing is as far as possible treated as a 'functional expense' of the woman in the performance of her public duty. What is new in the Soviet Union is, of course, not the maternity hospital, maternity benefits, and creches, but the universality, ubiquity and completeness of the provision made at the public expense for all the mothers in so vast a country where over six million births take place annually. No distinction is made between pregnant mothers whether



their union is legally registered or not. "Medical care during pregnancy, admission for confinement to a maternity hospital; twelve or sixteen weeks' leave of absence from her work on whatever wages she has been earning; constant medical supervision and aid; the right to be reinstated in the job when medically fit, with regular intervals every three and a half hours in which the infant can be breastfed; a grant of money for the infant's clothing, with a monthly grant of money for the first year towards the infant's food; and the provision of a creche in which from two months to five years old the infant may be safely cared for during the mother's working hours"—all these facilities are provided for to the mothers before and after the pregnancy. The idea incorporated in these provisions is that women should be provided with all possible ease, facilities and comforts for the carrying out of their most important biological function.

Apart from the freedom which the Soviet woman enjoys in other spheres, the most important fact which constitutes an important factor in the emancipation of women is the freedom of choice and separation. There is freedom of love, marriage and divorce. Quite a different interpretation is given to these three institutions by the Soviet people and the State. From mere conventional obligations ruled by *medieval* and antique social codes, which left no freedom to the women in respect of love, marriage and divorce, they are now transformed into systems whereby the individual's freedom of action is emphasised and brought into line with his or her obligations to the new society. Still over five-sixths of the globe, these three institutions of love, marriage and divorce are not based upon the freedom of individuals. There is no free choice left to the woman to choose a

husband of her own liking nor has she the freedom of separating from her husband. Whatever the differences and disillusionments in love may be, women must succumb to the life-long companionship of her once chosen husband. This is specially what the Hindu law ordains.

Like most things in Russia, there is usually no pomp or ceremony about marriage, for all that is required is the registration of the fact that the couple are married. Unregistered unions are not furtive or illegal, while at the same time registration is recommended. Divorces are comparatively easy, for it merely means the dissolution of the union by the free will of both the parties, or in many cases by the wish of either party. There is no atmosphere of bitterness or sordidness at the time of divorce. Husband and wife part with all the pleasure and satisfaction of the life that they have passed together and separate under an atmosphere of complete concord and cordiality, determined to march on for the success of their new ideal of creating a new society with new morality, unhampered and unchecked by disappointments and unpleasantness of their sexual life and relations.

Another process in the emancipation of women was the abolition of prostitution. When the Soviet Government was established, one of its difficult tasks lay in the abolition of the exploitation of woman by man. It has been gauged by the Bolsheviki that the cause of prostitution was almost purely economic. With the end of exploitation of man by man in the economic sphere, the exploitation of woman by man was abolished not only in the economic sphere but in the sexual sphere as well. The evolution of *Prophyt-actoria* was one of the most practical weapons in the fight against prostitu-

tion. There were workrooms attached to medical hospitals, where diseased, worthless and untrained women found work and lodging. The emancipation of the prostitutes was to be secured not only by solving their economic troubles and problems but by working them under a process of mental and spiritual regeneration, together with medical treatment. The word prostitute was abolished ; all the hitherto prostitutes were addressed as comrades so that they should not get the slightest chance when they may think themselves as outcastes or in any way inferior to other women. Gradually they were given education and training and sent out into a new world of factories and industrial organisations where they became useful units of a vast whole.

Thus we find the woman of Russia fully emancipated and regenerated. She is the symbol of freedom from all exploitation, subjugation and enslavement. She is the source of an inspiration to women the world over. She is the ideal woman in which focus the aspirations of every woman of not only the backward and subjugated countries but even of the free and so-called civilized countries. She is no longer a mere sensuous object. She is no longer a mythical and mysterious being. She is a nation unto her own.

The result of all this has been that the Soviet woman now stands emancipated. She has many heroic achievements to her credit. Sonia Grinstein, previously a locksmith's assistant, is the world's first woman ship-building engineer and built the first four Soviet motorships. Anna Chhechetnia was the first woman to captain an airship and Vera Matiagnina was the first to steer one. Many women have been the recipients of Soviet orders for outstanding work in industry, trans-

port and building. In short she has made progress in all walks of life. And it is all due to Lenin's efforts who used to think differently from his contemporaries as well as old thinkers about the position of women. The latter held that the "world is a man's house but the house is a woman's world." And Lenin expressing the Soviet view believed that "the home is the centre of woman's life, not its circumference."

## CHAPTER IV

### A NEW MORALITY

U.S.S.R. has the proud distinction of being the home of the first great collective effort to rebuild the moral structure of our civilization on lines entirely different from the traditional codes of morality. This experiment which involves the lives and happiness of millions of toilers of Europe and Asia is unique in many ways.

There have been numerous attempts on the Utopian lines in the past. Those attempts were bound to fail because the early dreamers did not emphasize the class nature of the state and laid down no plans to capture the citadel of political power. The Paris commune, may be, historically speaking, considered to be the first worker's state in the real sense of the terms. It also failed.

The Soviet Union which came into existence more than a score of years ago, as the glorious triumph of the workers' struggle is a grand structure of the workers and toilers' civilization, the moral foundations of which rest on the solid logic of historical materialism.

A proper appreciation of the attitude of the leaders of the Soviet State towards family, sex and property and other subjects involving moral values, necessitates a brief reference to the basic question of the nature and social functions of morality and also to the crises in values which arise from time to time when the traditionally established codes of conduct fail to keep in harmony with the extant historical development.

Before the Russian Revolution, most of the commu-

nist thinkers devoted themselves to the task of exposing the exploitative, repressive and inhibitive basis of the so-called moral super-structure of the capitalist world and hence proving its negative character. The Russian Revolution gave the communists a much needed opportunity to show that communism meant something positive rather than "eating human babies raw." The Russian Revolution mobilised the tremendous potentialities of the emancipated peasants and workers, against the background of a country-wide renaissance in the social, political and economic life under the leadership of the communist party. The Russian people have gradually created a new scheme of values. The new values, derived, as they are, from the facts given in the recent researches in all the sciences including social psychology and also from the accumulated social experience of a planned economic life, stand in sharp contrast against the traditional belief.

Let us try to analyse the difference between the morality of the capitalist world and the new morality in the Soviet Union. Talking in terms of this word alone, the fundamental task of morality is to sustain, harmonize and regulate the rights and privileges against the duties and obligations to the society on the part of the individual. These rights and obligations are determined by the position of sex, family life and property in the social scheme of things. Shorn of all assertions and accumulations, sex, family life and property have definitely and distinctly a biological basis, connected, as they are, with the desire to procreate life, to protect the offspring and lastly to struggle to maintain life (property, as the private appropriation of the means of production, a means of creating surplus value). How is it, then, that all sorts of taboos and fetishes and

inhibitions are associated with sex and family life and with all its long process of evolution is given a hallow of tradition and divinity. Property is sanctified and the entire state apparatus is used to maintain and enforce relationships which in the ultimate analysis of the individual morality would be nothing short of predatory.

Another interesting point ! In spite of their claims to divine commutability, the traditional codes of morality have proved to be easily susceptible to a number of interpellations and reorientations which have remarkably corresponded to the exigencies of the situation as determined by the extant economic relationships. Laws relating to private property, position of the family and even the attitude to sex vary under different economic systems.

Most of these complexities and contradictions of our social life arise from the fact that we forget that man is a natural link in the evolutionary process of life and we attribute to ourselves certain divine or semi-divine characteristics and expect ourselves to follow certain divine and immediate precepts in relation to social life which is subject to a ceaseless process of change. "Having established science", said Trotsky, "a cognition of the objective recurrences of nature, man has stubbornly and persistently tried to exclude himself from science, reserving for himself special privileges in the shape of alleged intercourse with super-sensory forces (religion) or with timeless moral precepts (idealism)."

Traditional belief about family, sex and property are the social experiences of the ruling classes crystallized into well-established modes of thought and action. To the ruling classes they are the symbols of their power and therefore with every fresh development in the class

struggle, sex, family and property acquire a new significance—"eternal" laws laid down by the so-called divine lawgivers appear to be made in the image of the extant historical development.

The communist attitude towards these questions is essentially national and, let us say, pragmatic. Marx deprived man of the idealistic invulnerability from the action of the physical and material forces. Marx denied the existence of the natural laws and looked upon the history of the development of the human society as the history of the succession of the various systems of economy. The whole strength of the communist approach lies in the fact that the communists study morality, not from the subjective point of view of certain persons, but from the objective point of view of the development of society as a whole.

For an intelligent appreciation of the morals of society it is of decisive significance to know how and in what way the people act and not what they themselves think about their actions.

The communists, therefore, with the logic of the dialectical materialism, regard all the cherished beliefs as mere passing phenomena which have significance only in relation to the particular historical epoch of their growth and evolution. This enables the student of social problems to understand why the maxims laid down by the religious preceptors tend to become the opium of the people after they have exhausted the united revolutionary content which was given to them by their authors.

The communists reject with disdain the lofty claims of the traditional morality to operate on a plane which is supposed to be "higher" than the material life. Morality is therefore a "class morality."



Even the ascetics who claim to be moved by "moral values" alone, in their supreme disregard for the physical world of the mortals, cannot escape the all-penetrating influence of the class struggle, and notwithstanding their claims for equal love for all, the operative significance of their precepts and practices does go to strengthen one side or the other in the delicate equipoise of the antagonistic forces in the class struggle.

The communists, therefore, abhor to hide the exploitive significance of their thesis. They declare that so long as there is exploitation of man by man, or class by class, the talk of an honest moral life is pure moonshine.

They hold the exploitative system with all its degrading and demoralizing influence rather than the individual "pervert" or the "sinner" or the "fallen one" or the "child of evil" to be the cause of moral delinquency. This belief lies at the basis of the communist treatment of crime, *i.e.*, to emancipate the human personality, socially by creating an environment favourable to the growth of all the faculties and individuality by sympathetic treatment psychologically helpful to rebuild the personality.

The rights and privileges granted to the Soviet citizens are not merely paper promises as it usually happens with the "fundamental rights" in the capitalist countries. The state in Russia provides full facilities to every citizen for the due exercise of his rights.

The Soviet Union is yet in a stage of "Transition" from capitalism to communism. It is, therefore, a class state and retains the apparatus of coercion in its rule and therefore, we shall not judge it by the ideals of a "peaceful anarchy" which is the final stage of communism.

In spite of the serious limitations imposed by the

external and internal opposition to the workers' state, the Soviet Union has, in a great measure, succeeded in emancipating the toilers from the age-long burdens; consider, for example, the Soviet attitudes towards private property.

Needless to say, the institution of private property with all its ramifications is the one single institution which can be considered to be the pivot of any social system. Private property is required not merely to satisfy the acquisitive instinct of man. Private property in the sense of the private appropriation of the means of production is the source of surplus value. It constitutes the dividing line between the exploiters and the exploited and gives rise to class-rule and the colonial exploitation is only another aspect of this class-rule. The French and American slogans of equality, fraternity and liberty were founded on the rock of private property and the world saw the rise of capitalism. And the recent four freedoms—freedom from want; freedom from fear, freedom of speech and freedom of religion as the war aims of U. S. A. are mere elucidations of the previous slogans and do not alter the class basis of society.

The communists have declared war on private property; it is an attack on the vicious system of exploitation of man by man which is the root cause of all our social ills. Socialisation of the means of production and that is what the abolition of private property means in this particular context, needs no elaborate defence in view of the chaotic state of affairs in the world of capitalism. It not only eliminates the wastes of competition but provides a far better incentive to economic effort than the ordinary profit motive—in view of the morally elevative influence of the powerfully aroused social sympathies created by a well co-ordinated

plan which it necessarily involves. The Soviet State has abolished all privileges based on property. It is increasingly becoming a disadvantage in Soviet Union to own a business or to run a trade. The "nepman" as the traders are called are denied the rights and privileges of the citizens of the Soviet Union. They have to pay heavy taxes and their children cannot make a career for themselves in the Soviet land.

The Russian's attack against property is directed against the conversion of the consumption goods into capital. Its implications are far greater. Production for use and not for profit has created new criteria of values which are socially more healthy and has released art and culture from the shackles of the market value.

The abolition of private property and the disappearance of religion are integrally connected. It is the Bolsheviks' attitude towards religion that has aroused most of the fury and rage on the part of the capitalist classes. Yet on a closer analysis the moral and spiritual perspectives of the anti-Soviet fulminations will be found to be more plausible than real.

The Soviet Union recognizes no religion, *i.e.*, there is no State religion and secondly, religious beliefs are considered to be of no account in a citizen's lawful exercise of his rights and privileges and thirdly, freedom of worship is granted provided no interference with the similar freedom even to deny "God" and preach atheism is made. It is in the so-called "irreligious" and "immoral" country like the Soviet Union that there is not a sign of the usual persecution of the followers of an alien religion.

The communists are against the organized orthodox church because it failed in the supreme test of its moral rectitude. To the Russians, morality derives from one

source only—the end of all exploitation which has been the role of religion in the toilers' struggle for emancipation.

It is not enough to say that the orthodox church was docile and submissive to the old Government and was an enemy of social progress and ceaselessly persecuted the revolutionaries. The communists attack the everlasting mysticism, the paralysing idealism, and a deadening faith in the supernatural forces. The spiritual atmosphere in which the revolutionaries grew up has kept them away from cultivating a feeling of sympathy for any religion ; indeed intellectually, the Russian revolutionary movement derived its inspiration from the fathers of French Revolutions and from German materialism, both of which were hostile to religion.

The critics of the Soviet Union, unable to meet the communist indictment of the anti-social and perverted tendencies of the orthodox religion generally ask whether the Bolsheviks have given anything positive to sustain the mental and moral equipoise of man in place of religion. The answer is that the Revolution has emancipated man from all exploitation and the struggle for the liberation of the oppressed peoples in itself is the great *summum bonum* of a communist's life. Think of the martyrs of the Revolution, no less " holy " than the anointed saints. One cannot read the biographies of men and women like Lenin and Figner without feeling that they were not merely heroes and heroines but the very flower of human goodness, the very soul of nobility, the very fulfilment of the word and deed of Christianity. Does it not show that men are capable of rising to the heights of self-abnegation, faith and love without the aid of traditional beliefs? Is what Marx and Lenin have done for the humanity anyway less than what the big saints of any times profess to have done? To-day, the

eyes of the entire world are riveted with awe and reverence on that Stalin who has shattered the beliefs that Russia will fall within a month of Hitlerite attack.

The Bolshevik crusade against religion is unique in history because it is not confined to destructive attacks only. Religion caters to man's sense of self-importance, his sense of superiority, his gregariousness, his key to the mystery of life and universe. Past masters in social psychology as these Bolsheviks are, they propose to minister to these cravings with ideas, practices and institutions of their own and thus seek to deprive religion of the least justification for its existence. Marxism, the official philosophy of the communist party, is a system of an intensely materialistic outlook and therefore science is the rapier with which the communist cuts at the roots of religion, the biblical version of creation, fatalistic outlook and mystic defeatism.

The Revolution has provided a new faith and a new value. The Socialist competition, the Stakhanovite labourers, the shock workers, the social service cadres are some of the replicas of the agencies which provide for a positive outlook under the orthodox regime.

It remains for us now to refer to the sex and family life in relation to the "new morality" of the Bolsheviks. The gist of the new morality is in freedom of personal action and judgment. This at one stroke wipes out the old tenets of morality which the Russians do not consider to be eternal or irrevocable. The communist attitude towards sex is that of a fully grown-up normal man. Metaphysical abstractions and meaningless idealisation of sex have no significance. The Russians have thrust all responsibility for sex conduct on the individual, on women as much as on men. Sex life is nowhere regulated by law, save in the case of seduction or other

forms of debased sex approach.

"In sex," said Lenin once, "you have biology plus culture." Sex to man, the Russian, therefore, is more than a mere physiological satisfaction, more than a sheer instrument of race propagation, though it is shown to be that too.

"Sex," writes Maurice Hindus in his book *Humanity Uprooted*, "is a high and never an inglorious part of man's self. There is nothing they (the Russians) say in sex itself to be ashamed of, to fear to hide, to hate, no more than there is in eating, drinking tea, reading books, listening to music. They are in other words seeking to emancipate sex from legal, metaphysical, religious and certain social prejudgments for women as much as for men. The orthodox people have cried out in horror against his attitude and have accused the communists of encouraging riotous living. But are metaphysical abstractions necessary or powerful enough to prevent loose morals?"

"The proletarian," wrote Lenin, "is not in need of the intoxicant that excites and stupefies. He needs neither the intoxications of sex nor of alcohol." The liberated proletarians, with the coming of political stability and economic security, have grown more contemplative. Considerations of personal hygiene, æsthetic approach and social responsibility as measures of self-discipline are getting more common with them.

Piety and puritanism about sex is a doubtful virtue ; it at least betrays a very powerful sex consciousness. The Russians are for that matter an unrepressed and inhibited people. Under normal conditions, sex to them is a vital and not an all-absorbing object in life. Unlike the ruling classes under capitalism they have not made sex a conscious part of their mental life, a form of

intellectual and physical diversion.

Have the critics of the communist system taken into consideration the extent of commercial exploitation of sex in countries which enjoy the benefits of an orthodox morality and which bans any free and frank reference to the mechanism or function of sex? The communists have closed the houses of prostitution and waged a relentless war against harlotry. The theory of sex lure in any form into commercial life, have also been banned. Any pornographic suggestion in the press or at the screen is ruthlessly rooted out. The Russian people do not crave and demand these vicious forms of sex excitements.

That the commercial exploitation of sex either through underground or 'legal' prostitution and other perversions of sexual life should exist in countries which are yet safe from the evil influence of the communists is really a veritable indictment of capitalism and of bankrupt religion.

Now, what is the fate of the old, old institution of the family in this frightfully strange world, a part of this globe? The Revolution has undoubtedly set some powerful factors at work which destroy the very roof of the family life. Private property has always served as a cementing bond in the family.

But abolition of private property and rationalisation of sexual relationships, legalization of divorce and simplification of marriage and encouragement of a more social outlook through the agency of the Octobrist, Pioneer and the communist parties have indeed struck heavy blows at the family life.

It cannot be denied at the same time that by emancipating the masses the communists have raised the general level of culture which can enable an ordinary

proletarian to derive greater pleasure from family life. In India, for example, the nefarious influence of the communist ideas has not yet become powerful and we are piously maintaining our traditions. Does the family life of an Indian worker or peasant with all its starvation, illiteracy, ignorance, and uncontrolled births and many deaths—stand out in any favourable light in comparison with the life of a worker of a collective form in a Soviet?

Much is made of the creches or the nurseries. The communists have not made it obligatory on all mothers to place their children in such institutions. These facilities are provided for working mothers if they would voluntarily use them and the parents can always have free access to their children and feed them on their own breasts if they like and for which full facilities are provided by the order of the State.

There are other aspects of communist morals, too. The communist treatment of crime is based on the behaviourist and psycho-analytical schools of psychology and the aim is to treat the subject sympathetically so as to restore the delinquent to the society.

Such is indeed the new moral world which the communists have been toiling for more than twenty-five years to build. Communism is not merely a war cry. Communism stands for a creative reconstruction of society, the type of which is being developed in one-sixth of the globe. We can sum up Russian morality in the words of Maurice Hindus: "Russian morality is a striking mixture or balance between liberty and discipline, personal enjoyment and social responsibility, utter frankness and utter disdain of abuses."



## CHAPTER

### THE END OF ALL EXPLOITATION

U. S. S. R. stands for the end of all exploitation—exploitation of man by man, woman by man and nation by a nation.

Exploitation is the rule of the modern capitalistic civilization. There is not a single human action and activity possible within the present structure of society which may be free from the idea of exploitation. Every human action and activity is actuated by the idea of profiting at the cost of others' labour. The entire civilization is rooted into the idea of exploitation, expropriation and domination.

A man murders another man. There is a pyramid of judicial courts to deal with this offence. A man rapes a woman. Similar courts are there to deal with the offence. A man steals away the property of another person. The courts are there to punish the offender. In fact, codes of punishment have been laid down in the capitalist world to deal with any particular breach of law and thus establish equity and justice in society. But there are no codes, no laws for the murder which permeates every human thought and action in the present order of society. They are those most gruesome acts of 'invisible' murders which the society takes no notice of. They are those acts of brutal and felonious 'invisible' raping, for which there are no laws and no codes. Then there are those relentless and merciless acts of loot, plunder and pillage which are going on with the passage of every particle of sand of time but

there are no courts of law and justice to deal with them. A person labours the whole day long behind the plough, bears the severity and elemental vagaries and inclemencies of the weather and turns soil into gold. But he cannot get a whole meal to satisfy his famished stomach. He does not get what he produces. "They are not too low, the grain to grow, but too low the bread to eat." Is it less than a slaughter for which the offenders are neither hanged nor persecuted? But these invisible tortures, slaughters, and exploitations are going on every day and the tyrants and exploiters are not dealt with. Why are not they dealt with? It is because the present society recognizes the rule of exploitation. A man or woman works the whole day long in a cloth mill. But he or she cannot get the cloth that has been produced by him or her just to cover their bodies. "They are not too low the cloth to weave but too low the cloth to wear." In U. S. S. R. exploitation of one's labour is treated in the same manner as the plundering of one's property in the capitalist society. Man's labour, his hands and brain are his property and its exploitation is inhuman and therefore prohibited.

It is the profit making or rent receiving capitalist, whether financier or trader, manufacturer or ship-owner, speculator in land values or investor on the stock exchange who expropriates the rewards of the labour of the tillers and the toilers. It is this class that is directly responsible for the division of the population in every capitalist State into what Disraeli nearly contemporaneously with Marx had described as "two nations," the rich and the poor. The former consists of the exploiters and the latter of the exploited. To the Bolshevik the world's population is divided not into Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews and Sikhs but into

two worlds, as stated above, not based upon religion but on economic grounds. A Bolshevik believes in the economic interpretation of human history.

In the sphere of production, the small nation of capitalists who owns the means of productions is not motivated by the idea of securing the most perfect satisfaction of the needs and desires of the whole community but by the idea of making the maximum profit. The motive of profit making forms the main spring of the present Bourgeois social and economic order. It is the Soviet Union alone, that has sought to transform the self-seeking, acquisitive and competitive man of capitalism into a self-respecting, socially minded citizen. Exploitation is deemed as the crime of the greatest magnitude. In order to achieve this end it has abolished production for profit.

Within the present structure of economic order, trade is carried on for profit. Acquisitiveness or accumulation of riches is deemed as the main object of one's life for it is believed it brings honour, dignity and prestige. But the Soviet Union, instead of admiring those who successfully purchase commodities in order to sell them again at a higher price whether as merchant or trader, wholesale dealer or retailer, punishes such persons as criminals, guilty of the crime of speculation. And instead of rewarding or honouring these (the capitalist employers or *entrepreneurs*) who engage others at wages in order to make a profit out of the product of their labour, the Soviet State rigorously punishes them as enemies of society and guilty of exploitation. Only a wide study of the facts of Soviet life would reveal what this fundamental transformation of economic relationships has meant, alike to the vast majority of the poor and to the relatively small minority who formerly "lived

by owning" or by employing others for profit. The most important and fundamental effect has been that the habit of able-bodied persons living without work has become disgraceful, however great may be their savings or their other possessions. The class of wealthy families whether as owners of land, employers of labour or rentiers and financiers has ceased to exist. More important still is the fact that the control of the instruments of wealth production by individuals seeking to enrich themselves and the power of the landlord and the capitalist over those whom they can employ at wages or from whom they can exact rent has passed away. As already stated, all persons except the invalid, the blind and the crippled are to work. There is no place for the leisured, the idlers and the inert. Labour in the Soviet Union is the most respected of all functions, and is encouraged by proletarian social opinion. Exploitation, parasitism, life at the expense of another, and idleness—all these are hated in the Soviet Union and prohibited by the State and by proletarian social opinion. Labour has been transformed, as Stalin has said, "into a matter of honour, a matter of glory, a matter of valour and heroism."

What has been done in order to annihilate the system under which a handful of exploiters oppressed the millions of toilers was to destroy the private ownership of the means of production. The proletarian revolution accomplished this with the result that private property is abolished and the means of production, *e.g.*, factories, mills, land, etc., have been nationalised. The production of the Soviet factories is the property of the whole working class. It may be argued that the workers do not get full reward of their labour and instead of a capitalist expropriating the surplus value, the State

receives the entire surplus value. True, but the surplus value which a capitalist gets is utilised for his own personal purposes. But here the surplus value is spent for the benefit and good of the entire community.

As stated above, Soviet Union does not recognize private property constituted in the form of means of productions, *e.g.*, land, factories or mills and banks. But it does recognize one form of private ownership and for that it ensures to every individual full and complete safeguards and rights. And that is a man's own hands and brain. The Soviet Government see that no individual or a number of individuals exploit this form of property of any other individual and individuals. Man must reap the full fruits of his own labour and this right is ensured by law.

Soviet Union denies the right and also the principle of exploitation of woman by man. Enough has been written in the preceding pages while discussing the status of women and the new morality in the previous pages. It will be clear by now that the abolition of private property and ownership of production in the Soviet Union had its repercussions over other spheres of man's life too. The entire outlook of the man and woman is so changed that nothing is thought to be belonging to one individual. Individuality has been effaced and everything is considered to be belonging to State and for the growth, progress and the building up of socialism. Man does not consider his wife to be his property and cannot subject her to the tortures of his idiosyncrasies and his spasmodic fits of voluptuousness against her will. She is no more a sensual object meant for sexual gratification. Freedom from exploitation has also relieved her from the drudgery of the kitchen. Lenin realised that "no nation can be free when half the population

is enslaved in the kitchen."

The woman is now fully liberated and independent. She no longer labours for her father as a girl or for her husband as a wife and for her child as a mother. Each one of them, the father, the husband, and the child are as much separate and individual units of the Soviet State as the woman. Woman works for her own development and for the ultimate building up of the new society.

Soviet Union repudiates Imperialist and colonial domination. Immediately after the seizure of power a decree was issued in November 1917, which declared that they stood for a peace without annexations and indemnities.

"By a just and democratic peace for which the vast majority of the working and toiling classes of all the belligerent countries are craving for a peace that has been most definitely and insistently demanded by the Russian workers and peasants ever since the overthrow of the Tsarist monarchy, by such a peace the Government means an immediate peace without annexations (*i.e.*, the seizure of foreign lands, of the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and indemnities ;

"The Government of Russia calls upon all the belligerent nations to conclude such a peace immediately, and expresses its readiness to take the most resolute measure without the least delay pending the final ratification of the conditions of this peace by plenipotentiary assemblies of the peoples and representatives of all countries and all nations.

" . . . the Government interprets the annexation or seizure of foreign lands as meaning the incorporation into a large and powerful state of a small and

feeble nation without the definitely clear and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of that nation."

Apart from these decrees and pronouncements issued from time to time, Soviet Union as socialist state abhors the possession of an Empire. The Soviet Economy is not capitalist. It cannot develop internal conditions which may give the impetus for an imperialist expansion. The cardinal feature of the Soviet Economy is the absence of private property in the means of production (factories, mines, land and capital) and so the character of production changes. It ceases to be for exchange or profit. It is for use. It is true as already pointed out in the preceding pages, that even in the Socialist Economic system, producing for use, surplus is produced and therefore capital accumulates. For, otherwise there would be no further development of the means of production, and there would be no further expansion of national economy. But, then capital is only congealed labour, not a means of exploitation, as it is no longer privately owned. Its production, in that case serves as a lever of economic expansion; it is no longer reinvested for producing profit.

Surplus value is created in the entire productive machinery of the Soviet Union. The surplus production does not create surplus capital. It can be all absorbed in the productive apparatus of the nation. In the capitalist system such a process cannot be allowed because it gradually reduces the margin of profit to the vanishing point. With the abolition of private ownership of the means of production, including capital, the profit motive disappears. So surplus production does not mean accumulation of capital which must be exported because reinvestment at home would not yield sufficient profit. A country with a socialistic economy

need not export capital. Therefore, Soviet Union does not possess in it any fundamental feature of an imperialist state or is becoming "Red Imperialist."

Further, another essential trait of an imperialist country is missing in Soviet Union. That is the question of over-population. There is no pressure of population. Even if the population increased ten fold there would still be no overcrowding. The criterion of over-population in the Soviet Union is unplanned production and inequitable distribution.

It does not mean, however, that the Soviet Union is indifferent to all that is going on in other states. She is certainly interested as she does not want to exist in the world hermetically sealed. As the first socialist state trying to create a world Revolution it is intensely interested in the movements of people and classes in the different parts of the world and is deeply concerned with the struggles of liberation of the exploited and the down-trodden peoples of all nations. This leads us to the first basic principle of Soviet policy. That is to watch with interest the struggle of the common people for freedom all over the world and to extend its help wherever possible and necessary to such a cause. It was in pursuance of this principle that the Soviet Union even during the period when she herself was hemmed on all sides by the military forces of no less than eleven Imperialist powers, was sending material help to the soldiers of freedom in Turkey of Kemal and China of Sun-Yat-Sen.

Coupled with this, comes the second principle of Soviet foreign policy, namely, the defence of the Socialist Fatherland. Ever since the Bolsheviks established their socialist hegemony the entire capitalist world had been devising ways and means to destroy Bolshevism and to



overthrow the Soviet Government. The anti-Comintern Pact was signed to check the growing menace of Bolshevism. The Locarno Pact was made with the object of creating a European Block against the Soviet Union. The Versailles Treaty was practically scrapped by that pact which readmitted Germany into the diplomatic drawing rooms of Western Europe. The object was to wean her away from the alliance with the Soviet Union which had been the only friend of Germany in her days of dishonour and woe. And as late as 1939 Munich Pact was signed to appease the growing lust and greed for territorial expansion of Hitler in order to make Germany the spearhead of international counter-revolution. Since the advent of Hitler in Germany, the French and British policy had been to encourage, aid and abet all his actions in order to prepare the ground for a concerted attack upon the Soviet Union. All this is to show that the citadel of freedom and progress was surrounded on all sides with the forces of counter-revolution designed to crush its peoples, Government which was inspiring the revolutionary forces of other countries, including even Germany, Italy and France, to create a successful world revolution.

With the aim of defending itself in a capitalist world the Soviet Union has always endeavoured to cultivate friendly and cordial relations with other states. She has always condemned the policy of colonial domination and aggression and concluded pacts of non-aggression with its neighbours, to minimize the chances of war as much as possible. Such pacts were signed with Germany, Lithuania, Persia, Afghanistan and Turkey, later on with Latvia, Estonia, Finland, France and even with Italy.

The Russian attack on Finland and her penetration

into Poland had been condemned in the capitalist press. It is stated that Soviet Union is drifting towards "Red Imperialism." The object of this book is not to go into the merits or demerits of this criticism. Only this much may be repeated that the Soviet Union does not contain those essentials of capitalism which can make her imperialist and commit any acts of aggression on any country. Whatever has been done, fully corresponds with the professed policy and ideals. In Finland, it was the principle of self-defence which caused a military conflict. If we study carefully the sequence of events preceding this attack and the Soviet-Finish correspondence, it will be made abundantly clear that if any freedom has been involved in this conflict it is only the freedom of the Finnish Government to sell Finland for a counter-revolutionary purpose to the enemies of Soviet Russia. The German General Ludendorff said that "Finland is the lock to Russia. Give me the key to Finland and I will open the door to Russia." Is it not natural for the Soviet Government to see that the key does not fall into the hands of the enemies? Finland would not listen. The Soviet Union had to bang and bolt the door by force, when all persuasion failed. This brought about the Russo-Finnish war.

Poland had more than fifty per cent of its population non-Polish, *e.g.*, Ukrainians and White Russians. The Polish democracy and her zeal for freedom has been eulogised in the capitalist press. But the fact is that Poland was neither a national state nor a democracy. It was a creation of the Versailles Treaty. It was created with the object of mutilating the old Austrian Empire and of creating a powerful barrier against the spectre of Bolshevism. Since then, there had been strong nationalist movement among the non-Polish population. Their

object was to break away from Poland and unite with the Soviet Republics of Ukrainian and White Russia within the Soviet Union. When Germans began to march into Poland, it was to liberate the oppressed people of Poland and also to defend her own country that Russia occupied a part.

The German attack has vindicated the position of the Soviet Union with regard to her military operations in Finland and Poland. The capitalist press who then was quite trenchant in their protest has now realised the justification of the policy of U. S. S. R.

## CHAPTER VI

### A NEW PLANNED ECONOMY

U. S. S. R. stands for a deliberate planning of the nation's production, distribution and exchange not for swelling the profit of the few but for increasing the consumption of the whole community. In a capitalist society it is profit which makes the world go round. Profit is not only the incentive, it is also the regulator of capitalist production. It determines what goods are to be produced; for, only those operations which yield a profit will be undertaken.

Anarchy leading to waste in production is the most striking characteristic of capitalism. We have innumerable instances of the crops of sugarcane and wheat burnt to ashes in order to raise the prices and thus maximise profits. Fish thrown back into the sea in order to reduce the supply and thus raise their prices. This is because of chaos and lack of planning in the production of commodities. Articles and commodities are produced without taking into consideration and without having any idea of what is required and demanded by the consumers. Capitalism from time to time produces substantial quantities of things which the rich do not want and the poor cannot pay for and which are thrust on the consumers by deceiving them through alluring advertisements or are ultimately destroyed for lack of any "effective demand."

Capitalists do, of course, talk of planning in their system of production. But it is not a socialist planning or a planning for the greatest possible production and

distribution in the interest of all, but it is to keep the prices up and wages down; with its disastrous consequence of a lowered standard of living for all. It is a planning for scarcity and not for plenty, and which reduces the scientist to a mere henchman, using science to bring more money to his employer.

Instead of individuals competing with each other a national authority (Gosplan) in Soviet Union was set up to work out statistically and communicate to each factory or mine its own particular share of exactly what the whole community of consumers, irrespective of their means, needed and desired. To decide in advance the type of consumption goods to be produced; the means of production and the creation of new means; the investments necessary and the time required for the working out of the schemes are, in broad outline, the elements of economic planning, the basis of the planned economy in the U. S. S. R. which is at once fully aware of its present and future aims. It is in this way that man in the Soviet Union has attained control over economic forces.

This socialist economy in its wider aspects of nationalisation of industry, agriculture, transportation and distribution in the interests of the widest social well-being has certain natural advantages. It is not limited by the demands of profit, nor hampered by the rights of private property. It has not to supply any idle class, there is no sabotage or strikes. In addition, it can use its machinery up to the operating point of the law of diminishing returns. The Soviet Union can use its agricultural machinery 100 per cent, the United States only forty per cent. This is the first time that planned economy could scientifically develop natural resources.

The U. S. S. R. was passing through its third five-

year plan, when it stopped due to war. The first five year plan started in 1928. It was characterised by speed and quantity. It began with the set purpose of reconstructing industry, liquidating the Kulaks and collecting the peasants.

The whole of Soviet economy was worked out for the coming five years so that each branch of national economy should fit in with the whole, one branch producing to supplement the other, with no chaotic waste in production as one finds in capitalist countries. While the entire capitalist world was passing through the worst years of depression in 1929—1934, Soviet Union was unaffected by it and completed the first five-year plan with sixfold increase in her production.

As soon as the first five-year plan was finished the second five-year plan was launched. The basic historical task of the second five-year plan was the complete abolition of all exploiting class and the building up of a socialist society. The principal economic task was the completion of the technical reconstruction of the national economy not only by increasing capital investment but by increasing the productivity of labour. The second five-year plan also aimed at raising the material and cultural level of the working people. The plan was brought to a close with signal success and with spectacular results.

The third five-year plan has been upset by the War. It was started with the avowed object of transforming the slogan of socialism into communism, "from every one according to his ability, to every one according to his needs."

"Communism in this sense, as its slogan implies, means a state of society in which production so amply covers every need, and people are so free of the fear of

want and of any inducement to 'grab' or hoard any kind of commodities, that it becomes a really practical policy to allow every member of the community to take out of the stocks of things that the community creates as much as he wants for himself, instead of binding him, as is done under socialism, to buying what he can with the amount of money which he earns by his labour or if he is old or unfit, by his pension." This must mean even more articles of consumption and the raising of the cultural level of every Soviet workman and peasant so that he would need more articles of consumption. The War has temporarily hindered the work of its completion yet one can say that during this period U. S. S. R. has built a mighty industry and is performing miracles with the help of science, making the deserts fertile, growing fruits in the Arctic, etc.

When we notice the work of Gosplan we realise that this deliberate planning of all production for community consumption ensures the complete abolition of involuntary mass unemployment, whether "technological" or "cyclical." We can hardly deny that the new system effects a startling transformation in the economic relationships of the whole community which has changed the very mentality of the producers whether administrators, technicians or manual workers. There is considered to be no difference between the labour of hands and head. No person's gain is the loss of another. Every individual benefits materially by increased or improved production and by the selfless and efficient service of every producer. When it is realised that everybody's share of the aggregate produce is made actually greater by any increase or improvement of that produce, it becomes everybody's pecuniary interest to see that no one should be inefficient, idle, negligent or sick. There is a universal and continuous

incentive to every producer whether manual worker or technician to improve his qualifications and to render the utmost service in order to increase the common wage fund which is divided among the producers, according to the sharing arrangements that the producers themselves make. Hence every brain or manual worker is eager to achieve the greatest output. The unity of pecuniary interest extends in fact to all the various enterprises in the U. S. S. R. Every one is eager to help every other in any enterprise, to attain the greatest possible produce.

Thus we find in this system of economy that total product of national labour is returned to the nation. The worker in factories receive benefit from the products of their labour, firstly, as individuals and secondly, as members of a collective state, its value being returned to them not only as wages but also in the forms of economic, social and cultural expenditure. The disappearance of exploitation and surplus value weeds out the parasites. The more important advantage being that a continuous reduction in working hours will mean that overproduction with its train of unhappiness and suffering will become an impossibility. The worker will be able to devote his increasing leisure to his own transformation and development, for which the State provides an opportunity.

The plan was a means to an end ; and the abundance which it produces is an end to the means. And that end is certainly not abundance for the sake of abundance, still less was it merely a means for keeping machines employed or scientists busy. The end of the abundance is to secure the maximum of safety and well-being to all upon an equalitarian basis and to give to each man, woman, and child, of every nationality, race or colour



equal freedom from exploitation, equal justice, equal opportunity for work with remuneration appropriate to the service rendered to the community, equal and ample leisure and equal access to education and security.

## CHAPTER VII

### REVOLUTION IN ART AND CULTURE

IN the U. S. S. R. art plays an important part in the great and historic process of building up the new socialist order. On coming to power in 1917, the Bolsheviks proclaimed that communist culture was to supplant bourgeois culture. The Soviet theoretician, basing his arguments upon the Marxist assumption that environment determines consciousness, *e.g.*, that every culture is the expression of a given social economic order and the creation of a definite class, concluded that the new proletarian regime must be reflected by a corresponding proletarian culture, *e.g.*, by a science, art, and literature, which should be motivated by proletarian ideology and tendencies. This theory asserted from the very beginning that proletarian art was inevitable in so far as communist Revolution had been realised in Russia. This historical fatalism imbued proletarian writers and critics with a profound faith in their own conviction and justness. They were convinced that their creation would revolutionise literature as profoundly as the Bolsheviks had revolutionised the social and political order. The analogy was pushed even further: The same battles had to be fought against bourgeois ideology and counter-revolutionary tendencies and the same measure of irreconcilability and compulsion had to be employed in art as in life. The new communist art received every help and stimulus from the State. The masses of the people themselves became the patrons of arts with a ruling body, the Soviet Government a

their representative thus relieving the artists from the patronage of their customers and patrons, who are made up of royalty, the papacy, the higher nobility and the wealthy mercantile classes.

To a Bolshevik, Art reflects real every-day life and explains its meaning ; it rouses the strong, supports the weak and convinces the doubtful ; art can draw near and almost depict the actuality of things to come ; it can recall the past realistically as if we were actually living through it again ; art likewise fulfils the supreme function of rallying all manner of men to a common cause. But the bourgeois world repudiates the theory of Soviet life and, therefore, negates the possibility of the existence of art in that land. They imagine that the incentives which inspire and create art are lacking in the Soviet Union—that the elimination of the classes must paralyse art for there is no person who will have any effective demand for the article of art. They further believe that there is even no leisured class in Soviet Union to interpret and explain the sublimities of art.

The Art of the Soviet Union, however, rests on a solid foundation. Her Art is not that of the ruling class but of the people. It is neither the preserve of the upper classes of society as in the bourgeois countries nor is it confined to a chosen few who sitting in their comfortable and cushioned palaces depict and portray life which is completely divorced from the actualities and realities of life. Art has been popularised in the Soviet land. The people have been given a hunger for Art as for bread. It is a sustaining thing. It builds the mind as food builds up the body. So it is purposeful, prolific and useful. The Soviet artist uses his vision to depict this new joyous rhythm of an aspiring life that is ;

being recreated. So he is there, performing his historic task. The great masters of the pen, the brush and the stage do not keep aloof from the people, they are with them. They love their people, suffer with them, weep with them, are torn by their passions and are stirred by their thoughts.

Soviet Art is not a closed preserve for the professionals either. "Art," said Lenin, "belongs to the people." It extends with deep roots into the very thick of the broad toiling masses. It unifies the feelings, thought and will of these masses, and elevates them. It arouses and develops the artists among them. And it is to this conception of Art that the Soviet people are all devoted and dedicated and they are seeking by every means to make it an integral and vital part of the daily life of the people. One sees on the curtain of village theatres the oft-quoted words, "To live without work is robbery; to work without art is barbarism." The aim is also to make the masses not mere on-lookers and auditors but active creators of the new art and culture to stimulate into self-expression their own native talents.

In other countries, most of its art is represented in the places of worship of God. The churches, the mosques and the temples are the places where the bourgeois art can find its place, use and utility. Art in them is not the art which reflects the every-day life and explains its meaning; it is the reflection of those mystical and metaphysical objects which are unknown but are made sublime, beautiful and fine in order to evoke people's blind devotion. For instance, in the churches, the frescoes, the paintings, the draperies, the vestments, the gilded crosses stir and gratify the sense of taste and grandeur. The high candles add to the sense of colour and beauty. The singing wakens the emotions. In

short art is exploited to create an atmosphere of awe and reverence. The right use of Art is to suggest through fine art the existence of God and thus exploit the art appeal of the ignorant masses. The Bolsheviks are determined to nullify this appeal of the church and religion. The substitutes, they have sought to introduce, have stirred the art sense in man more abundantly than the church ever did. The walls are decorated with the pictures of leading revolutionaries, pictures vividly depicting the evils of drinking, of ignorance, of superstition, of cruelty, depicting *scenes* from the every-day experience of the common man in the city and the village—pictures always rich in meaning no less than in colour and realism. The churches have well-trained choirs. The Soviets too have built such choirs; only, instead of religious hymns, they sing of toil and sacrifice for the Revolution and of the trials and triumphs of the proletarians and peasants in their struggle to overpower the capitalist rule. And if the ceremonies of the church have a distinctive art value, so have the non-religious ceremonies of the Soviets.

Thus Art has been a great liberator of humanity in the Soviet Union. Religion has been replaced by science but it is through Art, if not alone, that Religion has been conquered by science. In order to interpret what science has achieved or done for the salvation of mankind, art is essential. Art is a great interpreter. Without Art science cannot be carried within the fold of one and all. Art is the medium through which the voice of Science travels. Science interprets the universe and Art carries that interpretation to the people.

Art in the Soviet Union, as already explained, is the portrayer of every-day life and the instrument for rallying all people to a common cause—the building up of a



new social order. This is why the Soviet artist carves gigantic images of Lenin and Stalin to symbolise the new order, he paints the stern ascetic Gorky towering over Siberian deserts in Grey and Vandyke brown and field workers with light in their eyes in gleaming yellow colour. In etchings, wood cuts, book designs, he is delighted in depicting that is there to give him wonder and reverence. He has overcome contemplativeness and passiveness and enthused the graphic arts with vitality and strength. In architecture, he sought such forms as would give expression to the new epoch, showing the whole multiformity of creation embodied in life itself.

In the U. S. S. R. new human relations are developing on the basis of a totally new, socialist attitude towards labour, property and the country. It is the mission of art to reflect this new outlook. Its fulfilment requires a deep insight into human psychology, emotional power and monumental form. These general traits of Soviet Art do not signify that artists and art are reduced to a uniform level. On the contrary, one of the underlying principles of socialist realism is the full development of creative individuality.

Unlike in other countries the Soviet Art, as previously stated, does not find its expression in the structures of churches, mosques or temples, in the painting of naked women in order to invoke an erotic or sensual appeal to the people. It is neither confined to the abodes of the rich aristocracy as there is no such aristocracy in Soviet Russia. It is freed from the trammels of class and finance. Architecture has attained a wonderful spaciousness and stature—in sharp contrast with the chaotic bourgeois world where the art of building is crushed amid the scrambles of contractors who would build a

mansion ever with the sole purpose of making profits. A person of limited means may employ a less reputed contractor and thus subject and subordinate Art to money. But Art in Soviet Union knows no limitations of finances or the rapaciousness of the contractors. Art in Soviet Russia finds its expression in every structure, belonging to the people, who are all imbued with the spirit of enhancing the national honour and dignity of their Socialist land before the entire world.

In Soviet Russia artist as a "functionalist" has been transformed into a "constructivist." The functionalist held the narrow view that a structure must merely subserve the purpose for which it is built and the greatness of architecture is thus made proportionate to the fulfilment of that purpose. Thus a room must be a room and nothing more—that is, it must avoid all attempts at beauty and be just a room meant to sleep. The constructivist on the other hand soon discovered the vital principle that construction is guided by its own laws, and that these laws constitute the essence of the art of building. The anarchy of style, material and technique was ground down and a new entity created.

The main item in the architectural programme is the provision of a large number of public buildings, such as places of culture, schools, and kindergartens, in addition to houses for the community. In other countries, there is a sharp contrast between architecture intended to meet the requirements of the "chosen few" and that of the houses of the common people. The most modern technical methods, most expensive material and expert craftsmen are more or less concentrated on work meant for the needs of only the upper section of the community. While the usual run of houses on the other hand is as a general rule built of the cheapest



material available. The contrast in a modern city between the centre and the suburbs, between the luxurious residences and grandiose buildings of the central and residential quarters and the gloomy hovels of the factory districts is sometimes almost unbelievable.

The synthesis of material, theme and style rests on the needs and demands of the proletariat, and, therefore, lead naturally to the art of town planning. In the days of Tsar there were only a few large parasitic cities, lost in a multitude of penurious villages. But the rapid growth of factory and "collective" throughout the Soviet Union led to the magic emergence of innumerable towns, roads, central squares for leisure and rest, factories, flats, creches, schools, gymnasia had to be placed in logical juxtaposition. Here, for the first time, artists found a system divorced from the illogicalities in inequality, the gorgeousness of a palace could no longer by its proximity mock the penury of a hovel, or the sublimity of a cathedral on the vulgarity of a brothel.

Equally with the fine arts, the other branches of art too are contributing towards the building up of a true proletarian art. The Soviet theatre affords ample scope for the unhampered development of the people's dramatic powers. The stage is now a part and parcel of the life of the citizens, who look upon it as being as natural and indispensable an adjunct of the latter as the press to book. While the old time actor had no interests outside the narrow limits of his professional ambitions and thereby acquired the weakness of the worst type of stage mummer; his present-day successor is a man of wide cultural development and lives the life of the people. He is the actor of his own actions in his actual life.

The drama in the Soviet Union deals with the mental processes of human psychology, political problems, the rebirth of mankind, a better appreciation of duty, friendship, honour, labour, love and faith and with the great questions which have at all times troubled mankind. It possesses a wealth of concrete material in the shape of the new social and political order prevailing in U. S. S. R. and serves to depict the characteristics of the country's people as displayed in their lives at the present time. The general subject matter of the Soviet stage may be described as socialist humanism, while its form is that of socialist realism.

The Soviet theatre is a theatre of the people. It serves the people and is inseparable from them. This is how the Soviet actors feel about their job, "We Soviet actors want our art to help the people to know life and improve it, and we realise to this end that we ourselves must understand the laws of historical development and be clear in our social ideals." Like all Soviet arts, the Soviet theatre is imbued with social spirit and principle. Stalin once said that writers are the engineers of human souls. This striking definition applies to all artists. "To be engineers of human souls is an honourable and important duty and responsibility and we actors of the Soviet theatre are trying to perform it honourably. We have our reward in the peoples regard and esteem, the attention and care which we could not have dreamed of before the Revolution." Further it is realised by the Soviet artists that "the prime maxim of socialist realism is that art shall be true to life. But this does not mean that Soviet actors are to look at life with the eye of a photographer. We learn to see life in its movement, in its development, in its endless variety."\*

\* *U. S. S. R. speaks for itself.*—"Leisure and Culture."

have now in the Soviet Union a net work of theatres. Every evening, as soon as the sun sinks behind the horizon, hundreds of thousand of people fill the theatres.

The achievements of the people of the Soviet Union in the field of music as in all branches of art are marked by a high measure of success. The cult of humanism has found a ready outlet in the sphere of music. The basis of Soviet music is the ingrained love of music which is characteristic of all the countrymen and which finds its expression in the widespread and actual interest evinced in it by the people. The music has been proletarianised, instead of its being a preserve of the bourgeoisie as in other countries.

The importance of cinema as having a stupendous educative and constructive force had been realised by Lenin himself who said, "Of all the arts, that of the cinema is the most important for us." The style of Soviet Cinematography is also that of socialist realism. The theme of the Soviet films is as varied as life itself. Soviet Cinematography will have nothing to do with vulgar and futile films designed to cater to low taste. The aim of every Soviet film is to present a story of an adequately high degree of idealism, but its actual nature may vary considerably. Thus we find that cinema has come to constitute a powerful influence in the socialist education of the masses, the improvement of their cultural level and enlistment of their active co-operation in the structural development of the public life of the country. We find that the motion picture has become a prime cultural necessity to the Soviet citizens. The best films are distributed in thousands of negatives and shown everywhere, not only in the big modern theatres in the cities and the cinemas in the

countryside, but in clubs, the apartments of Stakhanovites and other people of note. They are shown to collective farmers far out in the fields, to army and navymen and passengers on ships at sea.

In conclusion, there are three essentials of elements of Soviet Art : realism, psychological insight and ideological significance ; and the aim of the Soviet artist is to give a coherent picture of the past, of the new socialist man and the new society in the making. Not only to depict this rapidly changing life but to do so in such a manner as to make his work a factor in the changing of it. That is the gist of what is meant by socialist realism. It is distinguished from the individualistic realism of Joyce by an understanding of the directions in which the world is going. And it is neither designed to perpetuate the legacy of restless, dominant individualism which descends to the modern world from Imperial Rome. It is more akin to the communal spirit of the Greeks to whom artistic appreciation and expression were a social necessity. Soviet Art is richly affirmative and human. It is concerned not only with what was and is but with what is to be, and how to bring it into being.

## II

### CULTURE

As in Art, Soviet Union stands for a revolution in culture too. No other aspect of Soviet life has invoked such a widespread admiration by the friends of progress and civilisation as the culture of that country. It is in the conception of the culture of the whole nation that the true significance of Soviet civilisation and culture is to be found. Her conception of culture is entirely

her own. The most distinguishing feature is its profoundly popular character. It is essentially a culture of the people. All the schools, clubs, theatres and palaces, all the priceless treasures of Science and Art in the Union exist for one purpose—the welfare and happiness of its people.

In the Soviet land the people have gained an access to all the attainments of human culture and civilisation and have created new cultural values out of them. Along with the further development of the great culture of the Russian people, all the other multifarious peoples of the Soviet Union too have made enormous strides in their cultural development, each of them building up a national culture of its own and simultaneously contributing to the evolution of the new socialist culture for other peoples to follow and seek guidance.

“Soviet communism avoids, while Great Britain usually commits the error of regarding culture not as knowledge of what is best in the world and a competent evaluation of the whole universe in which we live, but as essentially, or at least predominantly, bookish in its nature; or, if not exclusively “bookish”, culture may indicate mainly a preoccupation with selected parts of the activities of the world, such as music or painting, poetry or literary style, or even the collecting of things thought beautiful. Moreover, it seems as if the British conception of culture were closely bound up with the absence of any use-value in the pursuit or practice of the cultured life, apart from what may be admitted to be the utility of promoting culture itself.”\*

“In Great Britain the efforts to increase or develop his own culture are divorced from any practical use in the transformation of the world. British devotees of

\* *Soviet Communism—a New Civilisation.*

culture not only accept as inevitable the exclusion of the masses from the 'realm of gold' in which they themselves find so much virtuous enjoyment but also secretly rejoice at their own exclusive possession of something in which the common lump of men cannot share. And is not this the explanation of a certain polished arrogance of mind among these superior people, producing, even in the most amiable of them, a certain veiled condescension towards the people at large?"\*

"In the usage of Soviet Communism there is, in the conception of culture, no such connotation of inevitable exclusiveness, of a pleasant aloofness, or of a consciousness of superiority. It is, at any rate, definitely the policy of the Soviet Government, as it is very far from being that of any other Government in the world—that the possession of culture shall be made, not necessarily identical or equal, but genuinely universal; that more of the known means of awakening the powers of the child, or stimulating the development of the adolescent, or refining the life of the adult, shall be withheld from, or denied to, any resident in U. S. S. R. and that, as far as the increasing wealth production permits, these means shall actually be put, for individual use or enjoyment according to their several faculties; at the disposal of literally everybody." Hence it is in the conception of the culture of the whole nation that we find the true significance of Soviet Communism. As yet, no other country has a cultivated nation but only a number of relatively cultivated classes.

With this new conception and use of culture, Russia goes towards the fully developed man. The spread of education, the new leisure, new zest for life, and the new security show themselves in a rising level of national

\* *Soviet Communism—a New Civilisation.*

culture. A seven hours' working day, the shortest working day in any industrial country, sends the worker home at an earlier hour and with a reserve of energy for other occupations and for cultural pursuits. A lengthening annual holiday with pay lays up a store of strength and, through the opportunity it affords for travel, leads often to a wider outlook upon life. Insurance against sickness, infirmity, and old age removes the strain from brain and nerves, whilst the ban upon exploitation and the decreased incentive towards, and opportunity for, the development of the acquisition instinct set men and women free for higher pursuits.

The immediate result has been a new passion for reading. This is met by periodical literature and book publications. There are 8,521 newspapers with a circulation of 36 million copies. In 1913 under Tsarist Russia there were only 859 papers. Nowadays book production and book circulation is immense. This can be judged by the fact that during the 20 years from 1917-1937, Gorky's works have appeared in 32 million copies, Pushkin nineteen million, Tolstoi 14, Chekhov over 11, Turgenev nearly 8, and Gogol six millions. And all these books have appeared in almost all the national languages. Moscow International Book House, one house out of many publishes in 85 languages. Foreign writers in general are extensively translated and widely read. Upton Sinclair, Maupassant, Victor Hugo, Anatole France, Balzac, Dickens and Darwin are among the many foreign writers that are widely read and appreciated. Works of Einstein banned in many countries, apart from his own, are greatly in demand in Soviet Russia.

Writers are not only read, they are created. The Soviet Union gives ample play and great encouragement,

both consciously and unconsciously to self-expression. Still wider is the range of self-expression in the form of letters and articles to newspapers. Each factory and institution has its wall newspaper, which invites and receives contributions and elicits valuable suggestions and ideas for greater efficiency of factory life. Men and women can write concerning corrupt and inefficient officials as well as contribute positive suggestions. The wall newspaper is an outlet of social passion and the factory paper is the gateway through which many Soviet writers enter the higher realms of literature. In fact the corner-stone of Soviet culture is the universal literacy.

It is an accepted maxim in Soviet art that the artist should be immersed in the constructive life of his country. He must be absorbed in the life and work of the people. It is natural to find that Sholokhov, the well-known writer of *Quiet flows the Don*, and many other books, makes his permanent home in the village where changing life forms the basis of his works. Much interest is shown in the man who endeavours to create a new man and a new humanity through his works.

Artists amongst the national minorities are encouraged. National bards—for example, the men who recite or tell their tales rather than write them are sought out and encouraged. Folk orchestras and folk instruments are developed and many honours for local distinctions awarded. The result is that great strides have been made during the past few years in collecting the folklore of the various nationalities and songs and poems that have been handed down from mouth to mouth for ages are only now being committed to paper. Much is being accomplished along these lines in Kabarda, Daghestan, Armenia and other republics and regions of the



Caucasus ; among the nationalities inhabiting Central Asia, as well as among the Tratars, Bashkirs, Chuvash, and other peoples in Central European Russia. Songs, tales and proverbs are being taken down from the lips of old, often illiterate narrators and the singers of half forgotten folk songs.

Cultures of different soils and climes are given the fullest opportunity to develop and grow. All kinds of arts—drama, theatre, painting, caricaturing, music, orchestra, cinema, engraving sculpture and games with their different forms and technique are given full encouragement. Thus the cultures of the various nations of the Soviet Union—mutually enrich each other, gain from each other's past and present achievements and adopt from each other all that is new, interesting and worthy of emulation.

These things are most important stepping stones to a wide diffusion of culture. Native art, springing through centuries from the soil and taking forms characteristic of the place of its birth, is capable of infinite and beautiful development. As plant forms were collected by Soviet Scientists in the place of their origin and developed to the enrichment of Soviet agriculture, so Soviet Culture may be expected to advance in many new and interesting directions from the fostering of these primitive art forms.

In conclusion, there is one word which is more than all others on the lips of Soviet people. It is the word of "culture". It covers all that is here meant by the same word, and much more. It is uncultured, for instance, to chase a girl on the road, to walk into one's house with dirty boots or to neglect to brush one's teeth. It is also uncultured in the Soviet Union to neglect books and art or ignore the achievements of science.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SCIENCE AND EDUCATION FOR ALL

ONE of the most striking differences between the Soviet Civilisation and that of other countries is the way in which science is regarded. It is held by the Bolsheviks that man's command and power over nature for which he has been perpetually struggling since the times of primitiveness right down to this day, is essential and should be complete and intensified not only for the attainment of bare necessities of life but also for the further development of himself, of his own community and of mankind, in intellect and character, including the acquisition of every kind of culture. The Bolshevik's aim in society has been the remaking of man and this can only be achieved by an evergrowing control over the vast riches of nature which, further, can come only from his increasing knowledge of the universe. Armed with knowledge man can open the gates of the vast unknown riches of the universe. "Soviet rule", observed a French statesman, "has bestowed on science all the authority of which it deprived religion. Science is the new dogma... 'Pure Science', he sums up, is unquestionably a cult in the Soviet Union." Thus we find, the Soviet Union gives that place to science which the Government of other countries give to the religion.

"The outstanding feature in the mentality of the Soviet administrators is indeed this implicit and unswerving belief; as the main instrument of achievement is knowledge itself; that is to say, in man's continually increasing apprehension of the facts of the Universe,

This devotion to science does not mean what the Englishman understands by materialism. To the Bolshevik the mind of man with all its emotions and ideas and sensations and memories, is as much within man's knowledge as his body; and both mind and body are as much parts of the universe to be studied as the stones or the trees or the weather. What the Bolshevik takes as his instrument for social advance is the aggregate of definite knowledge of all these." In other countries the scientist, say, the physicist or the chemist, the biologist or the anthropologist, regards as the objective of his investigation, the external world itself as known to man, and does not, in his scientific studies, trouble himself with speculations about the "thing in itself" or about a superstitious reality behind the phenomena of which he can know nothing. The Bolsheviks dismiss it as futile and absurd or at any rate as without significance to science, all the various metaphysical speculations which the thousand years of philosophers have preferred to discuss. To the Bolshevik, the Science in which as an instrument they put so much faith is sharply distinguished from either metaphysics or theology. They definitely repudiate any 'absolute' within or behind nature of which man knows nothing. For man is found to have ideas about things and memories just as he has sensations and emotions; and these states of mind themselves form part of the universe that man apprehends and investigates. But the ideas like the memories, the sensations and the emotions are merely man's way of thinking about things. "The Bolsheviks are emphatic in the declaration that the ideas about things are not prior to the things to which they relate, (This is what forms the basis of the Marxist Philosophy—dialectical materialism as opposed to the idealism of

Hegel<sup>1</sup>). Thus they definitely reject as baseless the suggestion that there exists a primordial idea or plan or pattern of which the Universe itself is the expression or which it is working out.”\*

The Bolshevik's conception of science as the potent instrument of man's command over nature differs in another important respect from that commonly enumerated by the scientists of western world. While scientists in capitalist countries are trained in such one-sided manner as to make them almost ignorant of the effect of their activities on social institutions, politics and morals; the Soviet Scientist is conscious at every step of the repercussions over the social, political and ethical aspect of his scientific work. The Soviet Scientist is a challenge to the Scientist of other countries who believes in making a comfortable shelter or niche for himself, oblivious of the social, political and ethical implications of his scientific work; who thinks of research only as an escape from social realities; and whose notions of science as being far from the maddening crowd are carefully fostered by cloistered traditions. An engineer building a bridge will fail to accomplish his purpose completely if he uses only his knowledge of mathematics or mechanics without calling in aid his knowledge of chemistry. In planning the enterprise a scientific study must be made of the purpose for which the bridge is created and its effects on the conditions of employment of workers who take part in the construction and also its subsequent results on those who will enjoy its amenities and advantages. This is all to prove that all experience of social development whether economic or political demonstrates that it takes all branches of knowledge and requires their most intimate conjunc-

\* *Soviet Communism*—A new civilization.

tion to achieve completely and desired end in social change.

Still more important feature of Soviet conception of Science is that while the westerners make distinction between 'applied' and 'pure' science, to the Soviet Scientist it seems both dangerous and unscientific. The Soviet Scientist draws no hard and fast line between technology and science. For him there can be no science or real knowledge of the universe which is pure in the sense of having no relation to the external world or to those transformations, social, ethical and psychological which result from our scientific thought and activity. There is no genuine knowledge of the universe that is not potentially useful to mankind, not merely in the sense that action may one day be taken on it, but also in the fact that every new knowledge necessarily effects a way in which we hold all the rest of our scientific stock.

In the light of all that has been described, it would be foolish to suggest that the Bolsheviks have created a new science. It has merely presented to the world how the conscious scientist can serve society much more than the scientist in the capitalist countries. He has one thing to give to the world and that is how science can be a salvation of mankind. "What the western world may chiefly learn from them to-day is not so much such additions as they may already have made to the sum of human knowledge as the manner and the spirit which they are seeking to educate, in a true appreciation of science, alike their scientists, their administrators and their citizens. In contrast with the Soviet conception of the "Polytechnisation" of the schooling of all sections of all population, British Education and British Social organisation, have led to

a regrettable dischotomy. Scientists and technologists whose work is changing the material basis of civilization are too often trained in complete ignorance of the social results of their activities and of the social responsibilities these entail ; whilst statesmen, historians, and sociologists are generally educated in ignorance of the technological changes which do so much to mould the character of our civilization. Thus the dialectical implications of science are often not present to the mind of western mathematician or physicist, chemist or biologist ; still less to the mind of the western student of social institutions (sociology) or of human conduct or behaviour (ethics). We may even suggest that these aspects of science are not always borne in mind in the scientist's own studies, when he shuts himself up in his own narrow "specialism" which he may even delight in keeping what he calls "Pure" and unconnected with the world of action.\* Thus science, as an indispensable guide to action, has dominated the whole Soviet educational system. The Kindergarten polytechnical schools and technical institutes, universities and other places of research are all imbued with the spirit of devotion to science and are increasingly freeing themselves from the metaphysics and philosophies of the bygone thinkers. With this object before us, we find to-day in the U. S. S. R. what exists in no other country, an elaborately planned net work of more than a thousand research laboratories, with their own extensive libraries and collection, scattered over the vast territory between the Arctic Ocean on the north and the Black Sea or the Central Asian Mountains on the south, at each of which selected staffs of trained researchers, with salaries and expenses provided, are working in co-ordination on particular problems,

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 954-955.

allocated largely with special reference to local needs, opportunities or resources. The intellectual supervision of all these researches and, therefore, the responsibility for the allocation and co-ordination of the work of all the thousand institutes is now undertaken by the ancient academy of sciences of the U. S. S. R., the functions of which were drastically transformed by a decree of 1930. The scope and sphere of the activities of the Academy is wide and comprehensive enough to include not only the development of researches in the natural sciences, but also many languages and cultures of the people of the Far East not excluding, of course, those of the primitive races of Central Asia.

The result of this policy had been that science has made great strides in the U. S. S. R. during the twenty-one years of the latter's existence. Objective proof of this statement is the fact that in 1931 there were no less than 902 scientific research institutes in the country, with a total staff of 29,246 scientific workers. These figures are exclusive of factory and collective farm laboratories and their personnel, and of the observatories in the Arctic, which come under the jurisdiction of the Chief Northern Sea Route Administration. In January 1938 the grand total of all scientific workers in the U. S. S. R. was eighty thousand. These figures alone suffice to demonstrate the close tie between Soviet science and the people. But to these numbers of scientific workers and students, true sons of the people, is to be added the all important fact that in the U.S.S.R. the achievements of science do not become a source of enrichment of only a small group of people to the detriment of the vast majority of the population, but accrue to the benefit of the whole community. This distinguishing feature of Soviet science has asserted itself

from the very inception of Soviet power.

Thus we find that scientific knowledge has disseminated throughout the length and breadth of the Soviet Union. The position of science in the Soviet Union can be described no better than by the President of the U. S. S. R. Academy of Sciences. "Soviet Science has a broad social basis and is deeply rooted in the country. From being the realm of a chosen few, science has now become accessible to every worker of collective farmer who may be interested in it. Both research work and the study of popular science are conducted in various types of institutions from academies to the so-called "hut laboratories" in the rural districts and a thirst for scientific knowledge is displayed all over the country. The work of the U. S. S. R. Academy of Sciences is known and not infrequently debated in collective farms and the most remote districts of the Soviet Union. There is not a single spot in its wide spread territory in which scientific questions generally and technical knowledge in particular are not discussed."

"Science in the nineteenth century had become international. It worked for the good of mankind as a whole. To-day the horizon has narrowed. Scientists are encouraged to work within closed systems of economic nationalism, bidden to work for England alone, or Germany alone, to make England or Germany independent of each other's lands, to enable England or Germany, should need arise, to close their doors to all corners and yet not starve nor lack essential commodities."\*

Soviet Scientists are not inspired by this narrow nationalism. They abhor the very idea of prostituting science to commercial gains or narrow national interests.

"Science is faced with two alternatives, and two

\* *Socialist Sixth of the World.*



alone. Two masters seek her allegiance. The capitalist order, which has little use for her now save in the matter of war. That way lies his scientific decadence and death. The socialist order, with its complete and large-scale planning for maximum output, with its eager welcome for every contribution which science can give, and with its willingness to equip science and the scientist more amply for the purpose of peace than capitalism for the purpose of war. Science must choose and the choice is a matter of life or death.”\*

We might conclude that its close connection with the people, services to the people and elaboration of purely scientific problems side by side with the direct aid in accomplishing the tasks of socialist construction—these are the characteristics of Soviet Science, the features that account for its general popularity. This is with regard to Science in the Soviet Union. And in the realm of Education too, there had been as much a revolution as in the domain of science.

## II

### Education

The Soviet Union has a system of education that is more unified, logically based upon a complete philosophy of life and vitally integrated with the interests of not the few and the privileged but with the interests of all the people irrespective of class and colour.

Education under the Tsarist regime was hardly encouraged. Tsarism purposely maintained the people in a state of ignorance. It is sufficient here to recall the

\* *Ibid.*

words spoken by that notorious reactionary of the time of Alexander III and Nicholas II, the chief procurator of the Holy Synod Pobicdonostzer : "Popular education is undoubtedly harmful, as it teaches people to think..... It is easier to rule an illiterate nation." If at all education was felt necessary it was tolerated only as a class system on old-fashioned lines, designed mainly for the production of enough doctors, lawyers, teachers, clerical officials and other specialists for the use of the court and the Government, the nobility and the wealthy. It was cultural and individualistic, often romantic and apart from life. It produced introverts of the Hamlet type. The same state of affairs that prevailed in Russia during the pre-revolutionary days can now be witnessed in India. The idea of educating the masses finds no favour with the bureaucracy.

"But what Lenin and his colleagues committed themselves to in 1917 was the complete sweeping away of this autocratically limited, pedantically inspired, class system of pedagogic dogmatism, in order to substitute for it a universal and classless provision of both 'enlightenment' and training for life in all its fullness and variety, for all ages from infancy to manhood; disregarding practically all ancient scholastic tradition; avowedly based exclusively on the latest science in every branch, and free from every kind of mysticism: devoted to the end of fitting everyone for life in the service of the community; the whole system to be, in principle, gratuitous, secular and universally obligatory." The Soviet authority has, from its very inception, attached the utmost importance to the matter of public education. It believed that unless the whole nation is educated, it cannot succeed in her great task of building up the classless society of communism whose fundamental

principle is the full and free development of every individual.

Soviet education embraces much more than the school system. A point worth noting is that the street meaning of the word *prosveshtchenia*, which is always used nowadays to signify "education" is 'enlightenment'. The task of schools is not to make the students to cram and mug up the books without understanding the utility and relation of what they read towards the actual life. The aim of Soviet education is to enable every human being to obtain personal cultivation and to share to the fullest in all the things that give value to human life. It is to awaken the creative instincts of the people and to enable their creative energies to fulfil their aims towards a cultural life. Soviet education is a training for life.

Illiteracy, the greatest evil inherited from Tsardom, has now been completely liquidated in accordance with the law of the land. Article 121 of the Stalin Constitution reads as follows :—

"Citizens of the U. S. S. R. have the right of education. This right is ensured by universal compulsory elementary education ; by the fact that education, including higher (university) education is free of charge ; by the system of state scholarships for the overwhelming majority of students in the higher schools, by instructions in schools being conducted in the native language and by the organisation of free vocational, technical and agronomic training for the toilers in the factories, state farms, machine and tractor stations and collective farms."

"A school for every person and every person in school." That is the goal of Soviet education. Although this goal has not yet been realised, but the Soviet have

gone a long way towards it. The building of schools is being actively pushed forward throughout the country. During the Soviet regime over 50,000 new school buildings have been erected in the country. The school is the one institution in Soviet Russia which has enjoyed steady and galloping growth. Lenin has warned his followers that "as long as we have such a calamity as illiteracy in our country it is impossible to talk of political enlightenment. The illiterate person is an outsider to political thought. He must be taught the ABC. Without literacy there can be no politics; there are only rumours, gossips, prejudices, fairy-tales—anything but political consciousness." Wherever there was a Soviet or wherever Soviet influence penetrated, whether in the sunny Caucasus or the snow bound tundras of Siberia, one of the first things, the revolutionists brought to the people, like the gift from a parent to the child, was a school. Not only has the number of schools multiplied rapidly, but the social composition of the students has also changed beyond recognition. It required wealth and social position to gain admittance to the school in the Tsarist days. The dominant group of students was made up of children of the nobility, officials, clergymen, the merchant classes. There was a small sprinkling of well-to-do peasants and now and then of more highly paid factory workers.

How different is the picture now! In the universities, peasants make up a good third of the student body, and factory worker almost one-half. Children of the former ruling groups may find their way to a higher institution of learning only after they literally sweat themselves into social fitness. After they have done at least two years' hard labour in a lumber camp, a freight yard, construction job, or a farm, they may be regarded

as humble and hardened and chastened enough to grace a seat in a university.

The most important and noteworthy feature of Soviet education is the extraordinary 'universalism' of the system. In the whole of the U. S. S. R. education, in the full sense of training for life, has now to be provided, as a matter of course, gratuitously and with attendance made compulsory in every town and village, for every child, irrespective of sex or race or nationality even among the numerous backward races of the U. S. S. R. There is no other fragment of the earth's surface, at all comparable in extent in which anything like this conception of an education service prevails. How rotten and useless is the educational service in India and other capitalist countries where training is given only to make them serve as lubricants of the Imperialist machinery.

From the very inception of the crusade for making the whole nation read and write, the Bolsheviks realised that to make it a success, people must be taught to read and write in their own vernaculars. It was only in this way that education could be thought genuinely universal. Nothing had been more characteristic of the Tsarist Government than its persistent policy of "russification" and similar is the case that we find with all the modern imperialist countries having under their domination many colonial countries where they are denied the elementary right of schooling in their mother tongue. The language of the slaves must be that of the master, however difficult and alien that might be. This is what the harbingers of capitalist civilization proclaim. In India English is the only language which is compulsory in schools and colleges. The medium of instructions in higher classes is English. Nobody can deny that it is only through one's own mother tongue that a person

can understand a subject well.

Soviet Union's position is unique in this respect. There is absolute 'cultural autonomy' to every one of the numerous races or nationalities out of which the Union is constituted. Schools are being conducted in as many as eighty-five languages. There are now schools for the Tartars and Buryats—these nationalities which had absolutely no alphabets or printed script of their own. There are schools for Armenians, Bashkirs, Chinese, Digorians, English, French, and so on down the alphabet to the Zyrians. "Sledge schools follow the reindeer herds of the Nentsi over the Arctic snow-fields to the new feeding grounds. Yurt-schools, with their frames of staves and felt packed on camels, accompany the Uzbek nomads to their new camps on the steppes. Tent-schools are set up for the families of seasonal workers—the cotton pickers and the harvesters of fruit and grain."\* The aim of Soviet education is to enable the rising generation to take its rightful place in the new society that is forming itself. The Soviet Union sees that this aim is achieved in as an easy and convenient way as possible. With one great social objective, the educational system aims at a new economic order, the socialisation of its political life, and the evolution of the culture of all the autonomous peoples of Russia in their own language and traditions.

The curriculum of a Soviet school includes such subjects as natural history, mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy, etc. The systematized course of natural history based on revolutionary teaching serves to inculcate a scientifically materialistic view of life in the minds of the children. Books of the type of "How to increase the value of Dollar" as we have in the United

\* *The Soviets*—Albert Rhys Williams.

States of America or books like Hitler's "Mein Kampf" which are taught compulsorily in Germany, find no place in Soviet Russia. Books of the type of 'Blessings of British Rule' that are being vigorously propagated in all the British colonial countries are not known. Only those books which can provide a scientific and historical basis of the Marxist view of all subjects are prescribed and taught in the schools of Soviet Russia.

Soviet education is to "learn by doing." The new feature is that the giving of information by the teacher is accompanied by specific action on the part of the scholars; as, for instance, by their performance of the operations that the teacher is describing. With this object the schools, whether "four-year" or "seven-year" or "ten-year" is now placed in constant and intimate association with one or more of the neighbouring factories, or in the country, with adjacent state or collective farms. The school becomes a centre of instruction; not only in reading and writing in one or more languages, but also in the principles of all the sciences, taught always as the basis of the various arts of production. This peculiar process is called "Polytechnization." This hideous word 'polytechnization' does not mean technical training. It is an attempt to teach the child the use of particular tools or the performance of special technical tasks which await him when he enters industry. It represents a whole-hearted effort to give the child from first to last, and with a growing clearness all along his course, a thorough understanding of the nature of productive industry itself and a part of a social whole;—what industry is for; what place industry occupies in the social order; what effect industry exerts upon the worker, and what effect this or that particular product of industry exerts upon the

social body as a whole. It aims not at making a worker, so much as many-sided social being. It, in fact, aims at the improvement in the intellectual equipment of all the pupils throughout the land, irrespective of the particular occupations that they will severally choose. It is held that, merely to compel children to listen to lectures, or to witness experiments or even to "play about" by themselves in the school, workshop or laboratory, is not the way to render the whole body of citizens, which is what these pupils are to become, either scientifically minded or intellectually active. Nor will even a passive understanding of the lessons learned at school stir, in the adolescent, the intellectual curiosity, the initiative and the inventiveness that the Soviet Union seeks to create in all its citizens.

Polytechnization, it must be understood, is a "deliberate attempt to bring the school closely into contact with adult life and practice. All schooling is to become training for the active work, the recreation and the leisure of the producer. It is taken for granted that there can be no room in the Soviet 'school system for any training for the life of a non-producer. Every boy or girl without exception—even those whose parents have in the past been non-producers—will be brought up, from the first, with a view to the eventual adoption of an occupation, useful to the community. This occupation may be either that of a manual labour or that of an intellectual profession ..... On the assumption of universal participation, upon which Soviet Communism is based, all boys and girls have not only to be trained for a productive occupation, but also educated for active and intelligent citizenship, and further, for all the rest of the activities of life. And, if only we are to obtain the maximum benefit for the community, this training



for the whole of life must be Universal",\* thus polytechnization aims at producing a new intelligentsia, men who understand materials and their properties, who understand the significance of the various things produced and the scientific nature of the forces of production. But men also who understand the effect of new modes of production upon the whole organisation of life who, in a word, understand the parts of life in relation to the whole of life.

Manual work is not only held in high esteem, it is deemed essential. Soviet education is designed to produce the complete citizen, and in Soviet eyes no citizen is complete apart from manual training. Soviet education bridges the gulf between manual and intellectual activity. The fact that one man studies longer than another make him able to do more things, and may lead him to specialize on work for which the other is not equipped, but it does not put him in any different social position ; and often does not lead to any higher remuneration.

Pre-school education is of fundamental importance in the Soviet educational system. This starts in the creches, nurseries, kindergartens, playgrounds, child centres, summer and winter colonies. These are not simply what their names suggest but training schools for the children. Taking the children at their most formative period they seek to educate them in correct habits of mind and body, and prevent the forming of wrong ones that will have to be broken in later life. There are separate rooms for the infants, the toddlers and the three-year-olds. Training goes on under the watchword ; "Do not do anything for a child that a child can do for itself." To teach self-control as soon as possible, they

\* *Soviet Communism*—A new civilization.

are taught to hold crayons and pencils, to pour water from one jar to another without spilling it. To make them self-sufficient they hang up their own clothes, clear the table after eating and put away their playthings. To stimulate a co-operative spirit they help one another to dress and undress. With circling games and building-blocks so big that it requires two or more to handle them, they learn the value of collective effort. To insure rest and solitude, there is a room to which child may go when tired, or when he wants to be by himself.

Almost the same ideas are followed in the kindergarten for ages from four to seven: To prevent contagion, street clothes are changed to school clothes; heads are usually close-cropped or shaven; each child has its own glass, toothbrush, soap and towel. Though it is called the "bookless school", there are plenty of books—gay coloured books, books with pictures of Lenin as a child, story-books to be read out by the teacher about the lives of children in far away lands. These stories which deal with actual work-a-day world are favoured. "Just as a child brought up only on cereals will not be healthy, so one brought upon the pap of meaningless stories will not develop a strong and creative imagination." Children are encouraged to create their own stories and make their own toys. The spirit of this team is the spirit of the school in a more real sense than here. Children receive class marks, but not class places, first, second or third. Competition is desirable and stimulates a child, but in Soviet school it is competition between class and class and not between child and child.

Children are reared and given education without religious guidance. It is believed that "religion is not the result of an inborn force or impulse, but of training, of some-

thing that is superimposed from without. So, when the children are not given any religious education, they when grown will be non-religious, and then religion will dry up at the source and thus will die of its own accord." Similarly, all Soviet schools are essentially secular in character. The constitution lays down that all citizens enjoy freedom of conscience; church and state are separated in the U. S. S. R., and the schools are independent of the church. No religious instruction of any kind is permitted in the schools, which are protected against clerical influence by the law.

The co-education of girls and boys is universal. In the days of Tsardom no school instruction whatsoever was provided for girls among various peoples like the Caucasians, the Tartars, the Bashkirs etc., whereas at the present time all girls of school age, of every nationality, attend schools. Since the moral outlook of every member of society is the result of teaching received in early life, the authorities have spared no pains to ensure that the material and ideological training of children should make them grow up as honest workers, wholeheartedly devoted to their socialist land. The schools bring up the children in a spirit of Soviet humanism and genuine love towards the workers of all countries—irrespective of their race or nationality. Respect and solicitude for public property, diligence in labour, respect for the older generation, healthy and unaffected relations between boys and girls—these are the aims of a Soviet school.

Expenditure on education is the first item in the financial budget of the programme of development of social culture. In the year 1937 alone expenditure in education went up by 34·1% and there were corresponding increases in the remaining outlay on schools. The

rise in the cost of each scholar attending the elementary school was from 74'9 roubles in 1936 to 129'8 roubles in 1937 and in the secondary schools it was from 292'8 roubles to 356'2 roubles in the same years. Apart from this, expenditures on pre-school education, children's homes and adult education have gone up. The most important item in the educational budget is the expenditure connected with the higher and secondary specialized colleges and schools. A sum of 6483 million roubles was expended under this head in 1937.

The results of Soviet education are reflected in the aims and longings of the youth. In response to the old familiar question, "what do you want to be"? There are the answers, "a great writer like Gorky" "a composer of music like Miaskovsky." Most of them, however, show that their minds are fired by science and the conquest of nature. One boy says, "I want to be an agronomist, to increase the harvest yield three times and turn out the best seeds in the world." Another says, "I want to be an engineer because the country needs them: I want to give it a learned man." Prophetic of the new world is the lad who announced, "I want to invent a rocket machine and fly in airless, interplanetary spaces." Even the girls say "an aviator", "a radio engineer," "a chemist." Although Soviet education lacks monetary charges, it places the recipient under obligation. Soviet training is training for service. "Work and fit yourself to render comradely service to those around you, to your country, and to the Soviet Union." In short, Soviet Education is the sheet-anchor of the New Civilisation.

## CHAPTER IX

### RATIONALISM AND A NEW OUTLOOK

SOVIET UNION stands for a new outlook on the relation of man to the universe, equally with the relation of man to man and man to the society. As regards the relation of man to the universe, it is not religion or belief in God that determines man's attitude towards the understanding of all the phenomena that are happening in the universe. The Soviet system denies the existence of any supernatural force or any other super-human will that governs and controls alike the typhoons and earthquakes, epidemics and eclipses, the harvest and the hearts of men. The Soviet government stands for a resolute denial of the being of any known manifestation of the supernatural. It is steadfastly held that the universe known to mankind (including mind equally with matter) was the sphere of science, and that this steady advance of knowledge, the result of human experience of the universe, is the only useful instrument and the only valid guide of human action. It is declared that there is nowhere any miracle, nowhere any immortality, no "soul" other than the plainly temporary mind of man ; and no survival or revival of personality after death. Lenin, the father of the Soviet land, wrote a whole volume to mark off, most resolutely, from his own following, any one who presumed to treat religion as anything but superstition, leading to mere magic without scientific basis, and serving, as Marx had once said, as opium for the masses.

"To imagine or believe that there is anything in or

affecting the universe or mankind in any unnatural or supernatural way, contrary to the ascertained truths of science, and at the same time not amenable to scientific investigation is..... so the Soviet system declared.. ... merely the superstition, and the faith in magic, of the ignorant."

The Soviet Union, after the revolution, stood firmly for the violent denunciation, and energetic uprooting from its one end to the other of this superstition, supernaturalism, mysticism and dogmatism, which had resulted into innumerable traditional and proverbial beliefs and practices leading ultimately to stark and chronic ignorance of the masses. "So strongly does primitive man cling to the superstition and magic, derived from his barbarous ancestry, that no work of raising to a higher level of civilization, not only of the workers in the cities, but also of the huge mass of barbarians and even savage peoples of the backward regions of the U. S. S. R., the entirely unsettled races of the Arctic circle or the Central Asian mountains; the nomadic tribes; the scattered hunters and fishers of northern and eastern Siberia; and with all these, the slow moving and stubborn peasantry of the remote villages of the great plain, could be undertaken by the Soviet Government, unless all the beliefs and superstitions which obstruct the adoption of scientific methods of production and prevention were eradicated from their minds." For this purpose, the social atmosphere in Soviet Union is so created, that it is repugnant and unfriendly to any form of supernaturalism.

The vocation of leadership has commanded the exclusion from the schools and the newspapers of any approval of supernaturalism, and in substituting for it the complete inculcation of science in all the relations

of life together with the encouragement of and assistance to the research from which advances in science are to be expected. And all this applies, as we have elsewhere suggested, not only to the study of physical and biological facts, but also to the scientific study of social institutions and to that important part of the universe which we term human behaviour.

It is, however, recognised by the responsible leaders that it is unnecessary and even imprudent, to affront the feelings of pious believers by insults to their religion and by ridicule of its observances. Because it is held that a believer whose religious feelings are affronted will only become still more religious. The cultural standard of the population must be raised, books of popular science circulated, and cinemas and theatres substituted for church ceremonies. For people go to the churches for entertainment as well as for the sake of singing or rituals. The Bolsheviks do not confine themselves to destructive attacks on religion. They realise that there are features in religion which appeal to man's sense of beauty, to his self-importance, his sense of superiority, his gregariousness, his search for a key to the mystery of life and the universe. They proposed to minister to these craving with ideas, practices, institutions of their own. They seek to deprive religion of the least justification for its existence, of the slightest element of utility to man, materially, spiritually, psychologically. And this they have done through the application of Science, art, morality, sociability, social service and a new faith.

And thus we find in the Soviet Union that the weakness of religion or belief in any form of supernaturalism is not due to persecution. It is due to the tremendous advance in education and the spread of

scientific knowledge that we have discussed in the preceding pages. It is the vigorous and continuous cult of science, the strenuous attempt to develop the intelligence and increase the knowledge, not of a selected few, but of the masses, of factory operatives and peasants, of hunters and fishers, of wandering tribesmen, that has been the cause of the disbelief in religion and God. In the Soviet Union Science is the rapier with which the Bolsheviks have been able to cut through the intellectual fabric of religion. Science, it has been insisted, is the key to the mystery of life, its origin, scope and purpose. Science which is the hand-maid of communism, shall be and is the force in which man shall repose his faith. And for this purpose science is being spread through all possible means and with as much zeal and enthusiasm as religion is being spread by the missionaries of the capitalist Christian era in order to strengthen the hold of the white imperialists over their subjugated people. What the state has actually done with the churches and mosques is not that they have demolished them and persecuted religious men but simply separated the church from the State and put religion on the same footing as any other voluntary social institution. Religion has been made one's personal and private affair with which the State is not to interfere. "Every citizen may adhere to any religion or adhere to none. Any limitations before the law to adherence to any kind of faith or non-adherence to any faith is abolished". (Decree of January 23, 1918. "On freedom of conscience and religious societies"). Besides this, the school too is separated from the church; the teaching of religious confessions is not allowed in State, public and private schools where secular subjects are taught. The citizen may teach or be taught religion in a private capacity.



Thus we find that the Soviet system has given the world another view of life, a new religion of materialistic communism which aims to create a new society to explain all material phenomena and give a new direction to life. It has given place to pseudo-religions based upon backwardness and ignorance and which is a deliberate attempt of the rich and powerful to keep in ignorance and exploit the masses of the people. In the Soviet Union the entire economic and the political organisations and with them the ethical codes are alike staked on a whole-hearted reliance on the beneficial effect of making known to every citizen all that is known of the facts of the universe including human nature itself ; that is to say, on science as interpreted dialectically, to the exclusion of any miraculous supernaturalism or mystical faith in the persistence of personal life after death. The worship of God is replaced by the Service of Man. This is what forms the basis of the relation between man and man and man and society and thus the emergence of a new conscience.

Instead of prayers, lighting candles or retirement to a monastery, all of which argue the Russians, besides being of no practical value drag man into himself ; he will give himself up to building things for the new society, new factories, new cities, new homes, and new schools. These tasks will take him out of himself and link him inextricably with his fellow men and the new society. It is into such activities, that man is to devote his time, energies and talents. This work gives a man fuller sense of dignity, of personal worth, than any form of worship, for this will inculcate in him a sense of mastery instead of submission, or triumph instead of fear.

The unabashed and complete denial of any form of

supernaturalism involved the abandonment of the code of morals founded on divine relations. There is a complete absence of any sense of ethical sin in the theological sense but that does not mean the disappearance of conscience which as we read Turgenev and Tolstoy, the Russians possess in great measure. But it has been accompanied by a transformation of the conception of personal obligation. This change has, of course, involved the loss of any appreciation of personal holiness in the sense in which this has been understood by believers in supernaturalism. It is not the perfecting of one's soul or self, but the service of others and the advancement of the community, that constitutes virtue. No one is deemed to be good unless he does what he can for his fellow-men.

First among the moral obligations that communist morality imposes on the individual man or woman is that of service to the community in which he or she resides. This does not mean that the claim of the individual to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" is denied or ignored. What is asserted is that man in society is not wholly, or even principally, an individual product ; and that, by the very nature of things, he has no thoughts or feelings, no claims or rights which are exclusively and entirely the outcome of his own individual intuition or experience. He, with all his demands and aspirations, is the creation of the society, from the family group right up to the republic into which he is born and amidst which he lives. The service which this social outlook requires the individual to give to the community is only a particular outcome of the instinct of self-preservation without which individual life could not continue : a form of the service which he renders to himself in order that his own individuality

may be developed to the fullest practical extent. Scientifically considered, there is not, and can never be, any conflict between the genuine interest of the individual in the highest and fullest development of his own nature and his own life, and the genuine interest of the community, in being constituted of the highest and most developed individuals. Social service is to be the great method and the great goal, the great motive and the great fact the big reality and the big inspiration in the everyday tasks of man. It will open new channels of self-expression and will be a prolific source of gratification.

All this is due to the recognition of a universal individual indebtedness. No human being reaches manhood without having incurred a considerable personal debt to the community in which he has been born ; taken care of ; fed and clothed ; educated and trained. That debt he is held bound to repay by actual personal service by hand or by brain. Moreover, he is required throughout his able-bodied life to employ in the service of the community the faculties which he has derived from it. Any person who neglects or refuses to pay his debt by contributing according to his ability to satisfying the needs of the present or future generations, is held to be a thief and will be dealt with as such. In fact, it is only by every person contributing to the communities wealth production that the community can give each individual a share in the wealth produced as it is out of the general national wage fund that the tillers and the toilers are paid. Only in this way can everybody be assured of continuity of economic security throughout life, that is to say, of maintenance alike in sickness and old age, as well as in the strength of manhood.

Along with this paramount individual responsibility there is a universal and ubiquitous collective responsibility. Every social institution in the U. S. S. R. is held collectively responsible for the fulfilment of all its functions and even for the success of all its enterprises. The success of each enterprise is the pride of one and all. And everybody looks at the achievements of the state as the fulfilment of his own duty towards the state. With the oneness of thought, and action each Soviet citizen contributes his best to the tasks that the state has embarked upon.

## CHAPTER X

### A MAN IN THE RE-MAKING

OF all the activities of the Soviet Union, the one that stands in sharp contrast with the activities of any other country is her attitude towards the character and habits of the citizens at large. While there had been despots and rulers who had deliberately and purposely condemned their people to "planned backwardness", ignorance and poverty in order to exploit them, there had also been Kings and Monarchs, humane oligarchies and enlightened democracies which have often desired the good and welfare of their subjects, and have sometimes sought to shape their policy towards this end. But at the best this has been more of a hope than a purpose. The Soviet Government from the first made it a fundamental purpose of its policy not merely TO BENEFIT THE PEOPLE WHOM IT SERVED BUT ACTUALLY TO TRANSFORM THEM. "We are not only rebuilding human society on an economic basis; we are mending the human race on scientific principles." This slogan which the sports clubs of Moscow have adopted, is significant. No sooner did the Bolsheviks come to power than they realised that man must be reborn. This birth of humanity was not a process of mere physical resuscitation of the latent, deadened mental sensibilities and potentialities of the individual. Far from believing that human potentialities were mortal and could not be regenerated, Lenin and his colleagues thought that the principal object and duty of a Government should be to revive drastically these potentialities

which due to generations of serfdom and hereditary feudalism had reduced people to a mental coma ; and also to change the human nature with which it dealt.

Bolsheviks ascribed the physical and mental characteristics of the people mostly to the influence of environment in which for so many generations, they had lived. They duly recognised the influence of heredity. But they held that even the characteristics inherited genetically from the parents and through them from all previous generations, are themselves, if not completely at least very largely, the result of the successive environments to which their endless series of ancestors had been subjected. Even if further scientific investigation should prove indubitably that most acquired characteristics are not transmitted by genetic inheritance, and if it should reveal in man something which is certainly not the accumulated result of past environment, however remote, this would not lessen the importance of providing new environmental conditions which would be potent in effecting further improvement in each generation. Clearly, there is a social heritage as well as a physical one. Every child is certainly to no small degree moulded by the material and mental conditions of the parental home ; and, through these, by the structure and working of the society within which infancy and childhood, adolescence and manhood are passed. Not without reason, therefore, did the Bolsheviks hold that among all the environmental conditions which go to the shaping of man, those created by social institutions, are alike the most potent and the most easily transformed.

It was with this object that the Soviet Government undertook to change the environmental and objective conditions and create such external conditions which

could help in the regeneration of man and with purpose the Bolsheviks embarked upon the removal of the old social order and created a social order which could promote the cause of recasting man in a different mould.

To achieve this, as we have already discussed in detail in the foregoing pages, many drastic changes were brought about. It was to achieve this end that the Bolsheviks undertook the liquidation of the landlord and the capitalist, and replaced profit-making by community service as the mainspring of wealth production. It was with this object that all the means of productions were nationalised and transformed both industry and agriculture into what we have called "Planned production" for "community consumption." This creation of a new environment is what is sought in the establishment of a "classless" society in which every person would be equally free from "Exploitation" and every child equally enabled to develop whatever ability it possessed in service of the community, effectively open, on equal terms, to both sexes and all races and nationalities. The creation of a new environment has also brought about a revolution in the minds of the people in respect of their new conscience and a new outlook towards every aspect of life. The same object and purpose is to be seen in the determined concentration of all the energies of the community upon the universal improvement of the social conditions of each successive generation during the life, to the complete exclusion of any "other worldliness", and of any diversion by what is regarded as a mythical supernaturalism for which science can find no warrant. Finally, to make the experiment in the re-making of man successful. Soviet Government looks to the basic needs of life during all the different stages of each generation. "Man must be,"

said Stalin, "grown as carefully and attentively as a gardener grows a favourite fruit plant." With this devouring eagerness and persistent purpose for the deliberate raising of their peoples to a "new man" the Soviet Government sees that man is grown carefully and attentively through all the different stages of human growth and development from the very birth of the child to the youth to full-grown man.

In this process of regeneration, the Soviet gave primary place to the child. In the consolidation of its position, it allotted first importance to the young, who was to be the custodian of Soviet civilization. The individuality of the child is prized and fostered from infancy—nay even from conception. It was ensured a normal birth, by the continuous pre-natal care of the mother and at birth was provided with clothes, nourishment and after-care. From the moment child is born it becomes an essential unit in the Soviet Community, and everything is so arranged that there is no relaxation of care until it attains adulthood when it passes on to its place as a citizen for which it has received such expensive training. In short to make a success of manhood or womanhood the Soviet Union basis its reconstruction upon the child.

For the proper looking up and care of the child the Government has provided a net work of creches or nurseries where proper care is taken of the child, in the absence of mothers working in factories, industrial concerns, smaller trade establishments and concerns. Attached to working women's clubs and recreational centres, there are evening creches, and even at some railway stations creches have been instituted. In many of the long distance trains there are compartments devoted to the care of children under the supervision of



trained nurses. Thus in the Soviet Union it is impossible to imagine any industrial establishment, undertaking, or Kolkhoz (collective farm), any tractor station or collective undertaking without such a creche.

There is no child vagrancy in the U. S. S. R. to-day as in India. This child vagrancy is sometimes the result of the children born out of wedlock who are thrown out of the society as "cast off." In Soviet Russia no distinction, whatever, is made in the treatment of children—whether they are born of registered wedlock or what we call "illegitimate." There is no illegitimacy, for that rises only when there is a question of private property. All children are given equal facilities of self-expression, regardless of their parentage. Birth is looked upon as a vital biological function, not as a superstitious and mythical appendage of social convention.

There is a child co-education which is absolutely free from the sophistication that is rampant in the so-called democratic countries. Child is made free from sex conscience from the very beginning. He is imbued with a seriousness towards life and is fully made to realise that he has a mission that allows for no frivolities on the way. Child education is based on the major premises that the first ten years of a child's life are the most important and it is during this time that the true foundations of citizenship must be laid. It begins in the creches and nursery schools, and even before the school-going age, when a sense of responsibility and discipline is emphasized. Over the doorway of these institutions is inscribed "Never do anything for the child which it can do for itself." Education from first to last is provided for all without monetary payment; from the excellently equipped nursery school right up to the university course. Soviet Education is designed

to produce the complete citizen and no citizen is complete without manual training. It bridges the gulf between manual and intellectual activity. This is made possible by a process of Polytechnisation which has already been discussed in greater details in the preceding pages. It aims at producing a highly trained, all-round worker who will be able to link up the different aspects of Soviet life to the business he has on hand.

The great solicitude shown for the growing generation in the U. S. S. R. is reflected in the activities of the park. Visitors to the park may leave their children at the special "children's village" where the youngsters have the use of well-equipped athletic fields, playgrounds, interesting demonstration halls, laboratories of popular science, garden plots for experimenting, miniature zoological gardens, work rooms, etc. The "Hall of the Young Technicians" provides the children with all facilities for work with constructor sets, for studying radio, photography, automobiles, cinema apparatus, etc. In the "Hall of Interesting Pastimes" the children can draw, do sculpture or embroidery, etc. There are special music rooms and rooms containing a varied collection of toys. The "children's village" has a track for automobile and bicycle races, aquariums etc., as well as its own reading room and library. The "children's village" caters to cover ten thousand children daily. The main forms of recreation in the "children village" are the interesting collective games which enable the children to display their initiative, ingenuity and ability in path finding, etc. The games are so organised as to provide ample scope for the children's interest in adventure and heroic exploits.

Among other things, one of the principles which govern child education is freedom—freedom from preju-

dice, freedom from bigotry, and freedom from cupidity. These concepts are ingrained in them, whether at work or play and therefore, as a result, the Soviet children are singularly free, among other things, from that obnoxious spirit of racial discrimination.

The Soviet Government has pushed through the programme of child education and welfare on a tremendous scale. It has thus assured to every child the "rich equality of life." Soviet child is the child of the new civilization.

From child we now come to the youth. The Russian youth is an integral and boisterous part of the Revolution. This is the creative youth of the land. It is to be the future ruler of Russia, and he knows it. It is in fact to an astonishing degree already part of the governing apparatus of the land. Not the least impressive feature of present-day Russia is the amazing rise of youth to power. In no land in the world, hardly even in Nationalist China, has youth been elevated to such a position of responsibility in the judicial, administrative, and economic functions of the State as in Russia. The policy that other nations follow in putting into places of command persons of maturing age, because of their supposed experience and ripeness of judgment, is precisely the one that the Russians have discarded. They would rather take chance with inexperienced youth, which at least possess a feeling for the spirit of Revolution than to have matured persons reared in the old days. No two worlds could be further apart in spirit and in manner than are youth and age in Russia.

The Russian youth is a world all its own, compactly organised, sternly disciplined and boisterously articulate. There is the Komsomol for youths between sixteen and twenty-four. There are the Pioneers for youths between

seven and sixteen. Lastly there are the Octobrists for youths under seven. All these are political organisations but discussing all literary, cultural and social problems confronting them from day to day. In no country in the world, not even in Fascist Italy, is youth so continuously deluged with political ideas and political enthusiasm as in Russia. Youth is made not only to believe in the new political faith—communism, but to thrill to it, to be ready to fight and die for it.

From its earliest days youth is reared in the belief that mankind is divided into a class of proletarians and a class of bourgeoisie who are at constant war with each other. The history it studies in schools is not the history of nations, but of classes and their struggle against one another. The Bible is regarded as document and product of class struggle. All civilization, in short, is a matter of class struggle.

Further, we find that nowhere in the world is youth so independent of parental authority or of the guidance of elder. Nowhere is it so militant and militarised, nowhere so habituated to the notion of sex equality and sex freedom ; to a repudiation of religion ; to the conception of social service as a motive and a goal in life ; to aversion to personal acquisitiveness ; to group action and to exaltation of labour. Romain Rolland while paying a tribute to the youth said, " You are the hope of the world, the seed of the future classless society of all humanity, a society without exploitation of man by man, without frontiers between states and without hatred between races and peoples."

" In their re-making of the Russian people, Lenin and his followers began not with Adam, but with Eve. For the October Revolution meant to the scores of millions of peasant or wage earning women not merely liberation

from the exploitation of the landlord and the capitalist, a liberation which could only be made effective in the course of the years ; but also an immediate release from the authority of the father or the husband." In this connection it will be interesting to quote from the speech of Mrs. Litvinov, the wife of the Russian ambassador in U. S. A. Mrs. Litvinov (an English lady) while addressing the Women's National Democratic club observed that in the first place women in the Soviet Union did not pride themselves on being merely the wives of prominent men.

"I notice," she said calmly, "that at the meeting all the women are introduced as the charming wife of Mr. so-and-so. Even me! We don't have that in Russia. There are no so-called "charming people." Nobody would go to hear me speak because I am the wife of an official. A Soviet woman is an individual personality standing on her own achievements, not a shadow of her husband's importance." (*New York Times Magazine*).

The purpose of the Bolsheviks was not emancipation for its own sake, but the raising of women as part of the humanity which had to be re-made. It was seen, therefore, that the first step in this elevation, so far as the women were concerned, was to set them free from all sorts of limitations, restrictions, taboos, and traditional beliefs and prejudices. She has the freedom from economic bondage, household and domestic drudgery, as well as from man-weilded authority. She has the freedom of motherhood ; she has the right to abortion ; she has the freedom to divorce. All this does not mean that these are encouraged ; the legalising of these does not mean that the Soviet Government advocates them. It nearly gives women the right to choose for themselves.

From henceforth the woman was to be in all respects, of equal status with the men, whether as a citizen, as a producer, as a consumer, or even as a member of the "Vocation of Leadership." Much has been written on the emancipation of the women in the preceding pages. It obviates the utility of repeating the same here. It will be all clear by now that all limitation and restrictions pertaining to sex have been removed and woman has come to occupy the same position as man—both striving shoulder to shoulder for the building up of a new civilization.

In the experiment of re-making, the health and consequently housing play no less important role. Their objective as already described is to totally change the environment of the people so as to give them a different physical and mental outlook as well as to create a state of positive health rather than the mere tacting of epidemics and diseases. The distinctive feature of health service is its universality. Medicine has been socialised whereby each individual obtains free and prompt medical service. There are health centres in factories as well as in rural areas. A feature of the rural health service is the flying squad of doctors and nurses which is sent for a limited time into one rural district after another either to cope with special needs or exceptional outbreaks of epidemic.

Equally no less is the importance of the "organization of leisure" in the scheme of regeneration of man. Leisure is utilised not in idling and squandering away the time, but in the attainment of 'physical culture', 'political culture' and 'artistic culture'. Universalism is the chief characteristic of all these cultures. The most striking manifestation of physical culture is the organised participation in every form of sport or games from running,

skating, ski-jumping, rowing, bicycling, fencing and gymnastic entertainments, to football, basket ball, bowels, lawn tennis, baseball and folk-dancing. Gliding and parachute jumping are growing specialities and there are already a considerable number of amateur aviators. Just imagine a multitude of young and old engaged in their physical culture at big stadiums of the physical culture centres: some running, some skating, some skiing, some jumping, some rowing others gliding and parachuting, one naturally exclaims, "In fact Soviet man is in the re-making."

Second only in magnitude to the deliberate promotion of physical culture is the planned dissemination of what is termed political culture. This is done by different youth political organisations, Comsomals, Pioneers, and Octobrists through the wide circulation of newspapers filled with nothing but reports and discussions about public affairs, including short stories illustrating these subjects devoid of any advertisements.

The artistic culture of the masses has its own place in the re-making of man. In schools and colleges and other institutions children are encouraged to form library circles, musical circles, and dramatic circles. A popular feeling for art is created out of the picture galleries and museums, the theatre and the ballet, out of music and literature; and in all the arts, also out of the practitioners themselves.

As it has already been stressed in the beginning that Soviet Government gives a large place, in its policy of the re-making of man to measure for the transformation of the environment, alike of the dwellers in the cities and in rural areas. It includes a whole series of colossal projects. These range from gigantic schemes of artificial irrigation, roads, navigable waterways and an



all-pervading electrification of the whole area of the U. S. S. R. But of all the schemes of changing environment, the one of immediate importance and which engaged the attention of the Soviet Government is constituted by the buildings. There had been schemes of town planning which aimed to ensure to every citizen a decent and comforting dwelling.

Scarcely less important than adequate accommodation in influence upon the process of regeneration, are the various common services that the close aggregation of buildings and persons in cities renders necessary. These are the municipal services which have, in the matters as water supply and main drainage, paving and lighting, means of transport, public baths and other accessories of the civilized life of a densely crowded population, transformed many of the cities almost beyond recognition. Municipal services prior to the Revolution in U. S. S. R. which find their counterpart in the other now civilized countries usually extended only to the part of the city inhabited by the wealthy and official classes.

Thus, we find that all the activities, undertakings and experiments of the Soviet Union are directed towards one and single ultimate object, of creating a new man—a man resurrected and regenerated. We find, thus, a new generation rising, healthy, buoyant in spirit, rich in thought, and able to make the country a tower of strength and pride.







